MR PUNCH'S YOUNG REFITER

By
F. ANSTEY,
AUTHOR OF
"VICE VERSA"

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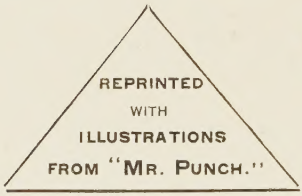
YOUNG RECITER.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FROM "MR. PUNCH."

MR. PUNCH'S YOUNG RECITER:

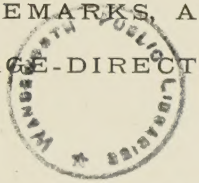
(BURGLAR BILL, AND OTHER PIECES.)

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS,

REMARKS, AND

STAGE-DIRECTIONS.



BY F. ANSTEY,

AUTHOR OF "VICE VERSÂ;" "VOCES POPULI," &C.

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MR. PUNCH'S YOUNG RECITER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Art of Recitation, pronounced (by certain of its professors) to be the noblest of all the Arts, has, it is almost unnecessary to say, been held in the highest honour from a very early period in the World's History. Ancient Greece had her Rhapsodists, who were simply an organised and official body of professional reciters. Plutarch relates that the Syracusans, after defeating Nicias, spared all of their prisoners who were able

to recite, though to some, indeed, this story will appear so strange as to be well-nigh incredible. In Rome, too, during the golden age of Augustus, and for at least a century afterwards, poets were in the habit, on warm days, of reciting their own compositions to their friends, whose keen appreciation of these intellectual privileges may be gathered from certain passages in the works of Horace and Juvenal. Instances could doubtless be multiplied; but enough has perhaps been said to establish the antiquity of the Art, and the peculiar veneration that has always attached to its votaries.

And this veneration continues even to the present day. Go where we will in modern society, the most prominent feature "on the carpet" is the Amateur Reciter; and there is no shorter cut to social distinction, no surer method of conquering the admiration and affection of one's fellow-creatures, than by cultivating the power of committing familiar poems to memory, and then repeating them aloud to a select circle of friends and acquaintances.

These things being so, a Manual by which these surely not undesirable results are brought within the compass of the meanest capacity should require but little in the way of apology. The Compiler cannot—for obvious personal reasons—advise that the poems to be recited should be the exclusive product of the Reciter's own Muse; nor can he hold forth any reasonable prospect that a pupil who has mastered

the art of recitation, will be able to save his life thereby in situations of bodily peril; for such a course should only be resorted to at the last instance, and even then—now that the ancient Syracusans have ceased to exist—will not improbably precipitate, rather than avert, the doom of him who should venture to adopt it.

But, with these exceptions, there is no more enjoyable, and (if pursued with moderation), healthful exercise, nor any better fitted to further the ends of a young man desirous of making a noise in the world, and setting people talking, than that of public Recitation.

Such a young man—and, for that matter, a young woman with similar aims—will, it is anticipated, find in this little Manual a guide which will lead them by sure and easy stages to the summit of their highest ambitions.

It consists of a series of studies, designed to cover as wide a range as possible, and graduated in proportion to the pupil's progress, which, from their extreme simplicity, are eminently adapted to the powers of the Amateur Reciter, while they are accompanied by suggestions and stage directions that should render an Elocution Coach altogether superfluous. Indeed, the Compiler is bold enough to assert that a young Reciter who will take the trouble diligently to master all the examples, and declaim them in

public, will be capable of almost anything, if he lives.

As for the pieces themselves, they are new and original, but are not put forth with any view of challenging comparison with those existing masterpieces which have already been occupied as fields for elocutionary enterprise; they are offered merely as a milder and preparatory course, after which the established favourites (which are really very limited in number) can be attacked with confidence.

Still, without undue conceit, the Compiler trusts that the poems in his collection are, on their own merits, not altogether unworthy of being dedicated to that flower of Nineteenth Century Culture—the gifted but wholly untrained Amateur. They may not be destined to rank among the Classics; but the poet's heart has gone out into every line, to an extent which was occasionally inconvenient; the workmanship, though not showy, is sound; the rhymes have been tested at every stoppage, like railway wheels; and the metre will be found on examination more correct than any supplied by the most conscientious Gas Company. More than this can scarcely be said—but, at the same time, it would be impossible to say less. It only remains therefore, to offer the Student a few general hints, which, as it is extremely improbable in the nature of things that they will ever be read, will not be found impertinent. And we will treat:

1stly. *Of Practice.*—This, to be beneficial, must be constant. You should practise Elocution in your tub, in the street, in your morning train or omnibus, at your office desk or in your professional chambers, and at the restaurant where you are accustomed to lunch. Never mind what people say or think—if you do, you will never become a Reciter. The main thing to be acquired is total indifference to the presence of a crowd. A person, who is now a distinguished ornament of several suburban back-drawing-rooms, once admitted to the present writer that he attributed his *sangfroid* and the purity of his enunciation (both of which are peculiar), entirely to a habit, formed by him in early life, of walking down Piccadilly every afternoon, repeating "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" at the top of his voice, with a hot potato in his mouth. A similar, though not identical, anecdote is recorded of Demosthenes.

2ndly. *Of Business.*—It will seem, at first hearing, a hard saying to the enthusiastic young Amateur, who is conscious that Nature intended him for better things than the particular occupation by which he is supposed to gain his livelihood—but it is true notwithstanding—that he will never make a mark as a Reciter, if he neglects his business

Let him take courage, however, the business we are referring to is not likely to be at all repugnant to him. What is meant here thereby is merely a series of appropriate motions and gestures, the chastened and restrained form of which serves to distinguish Recitation from that coarser and less imaginative Art styled "Dramatic."

You will have no difficulty in conceiving that the audience you are to delight may be somewhat limited in intelligence. It is not their fault, and you must try to make allowances for this dulness of theirs, and do what you can to assist it. This assistance is what is known in the profession as "business." For example, suppose you have to describe to them a strong swimmer battling with the waves—it will be impossible to convey so subtle and elusive an idea to their minds without actually going through a sort of short pantomime of the act of swimming. Even here, however, judgment must be employed, and, unless your audience be very dense indeed, there is no need for you absolutely to lie down on the floor and strike out. Always leave something to be supplied by the imagination—but take care to leave as little as possible. Accessories, as we shall see in the course of our examples, have a distinct value, and it will

scarcely be believed what wonderful effects can be produced by such simple means as a music-stand, a flower-pot, or even a folding-hat. We will pass on, however, to the consideration of an agreeable convention, indispensable to all Reciters, which we will term "The Imaginary Second Person."

3*rdly. Of The Imaginary Second Person.*—The Imaginary Second Person has no corporeal existence. To invest this Figment with a personality which shall be realised by your audience, to endow him with sentiments and opinions — without the utterance by him of a single word—this is indeed a triumph of Elocutionary Art! Yet it can be done, and this Manual will teach you how to do it. You must have absolute faith in him yourself, and learn to conceive of him as a curious, sceptical, or sympathetic Interlocutor, as the case may be. We have known cases where—such was the art employed—that the Viewless and Voiceless One was actually preferred by the audience to the Reciter himself!

4*thly. Of Facial Expression.*—In ordinary life, violent facial expression is seldom employed. Little or no play of feature is brought to bear in directing a cabman, or taking a railway

ticket, and only a very demonstrative person would seek in asking his way to arouse the sympathy of, say a policeman, by arching his eyebrows, enlarging his eyes, extending his hand, and communicating a quiver of suspense to his lips.

But on the platform, everything is exaggerated, or it will be unperceived: your audience expect animation—even in the most trivial situations. Endeavour, then, to impart the utmost flexibility to your facial muscles, practise elevating each eyebrow independently of the other, roll your eyes until they work with perfect ease in their sockets, and train your lips to acquire the elasticity of gutta-percha. For the nose, a haughty expansion of the nostrils will greatly aid the effect of a sneer. The ears should be left in repose. We have only seen one Reciter who made any points with these organs, and it seemed to us that his method involved a certain loss of dignity.

5thly. Of Voice Regulation.—The Beginner but too often finds that, in delivering a sentiment which should be highly impressive, he produces it at the critical moment in a somewhat broken-winded fashion. The best remedy for this is to take a raw egg beaten up in sherry immediately before the line at which experience teaches him he is in danger

of failure. The more frequently he recites, the fewer will be the eggs with which it will be necessary to provide himself.

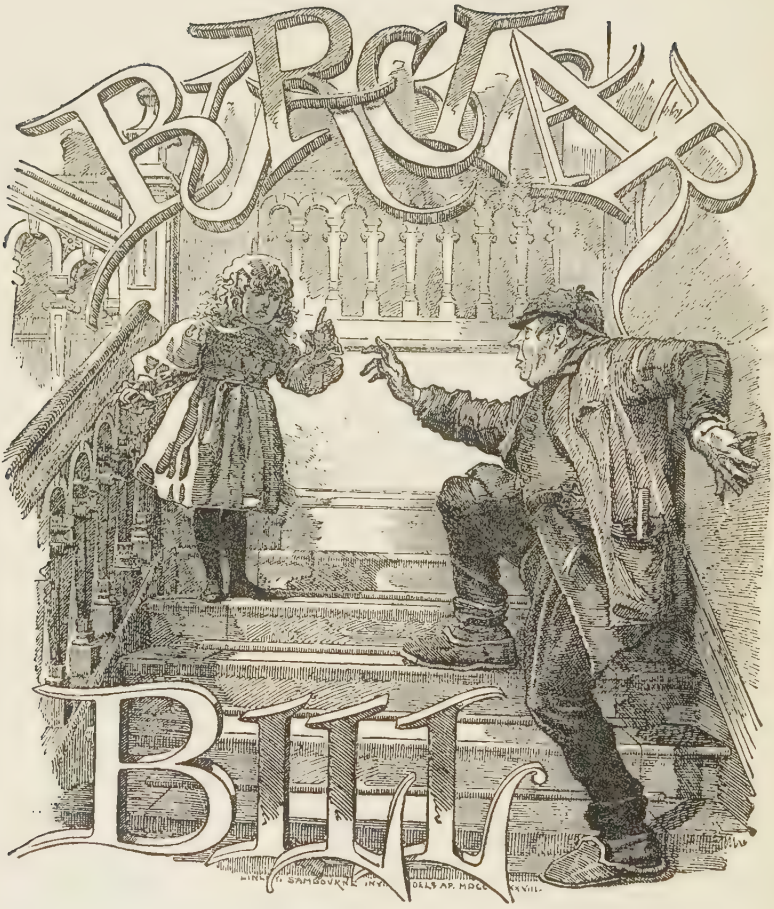
6*thly. Of the Falsetto.*—It is still a moot point how far the employment of the falsetto is desirable in a young reciter. Some maintain that it is invariably resented by the audience as an additional—we *should* say a blemish in an otherwise meritorious performance. For his own part, the writer is distinctly of opinion that, for portraying agonised mothers, very young children, distressed females, and old men, there is nothing more effective than a sustained falsetto. What, for instance, would our national drama of "Mr. Punch" be, without the aid of the falsetto?—but here we are straying into the domains of the Sister Art.

7*thly. Of Nervousness.*—True talent is always more or less nervous. The greater your nervousness, the more incontestable are your gifts. By betraying palpable discomposure, you at once afford your audience a gratifying sense of superiority, and nothing tends so much to put ordinary mankind in good humour—with themselves first and afterwards with the inspirer. Therefore it seems unwise to adopt any remedy for what is in itself a recommendation. Nervousness may indeed cause you to lose your memory to a degree which may render you incapable of proceeding, but

we are not sure that even that—however, do not worry yourself about nervousness.

8*thly. Of Taking an Encore.*—Instruction on this head is almost needless. When you get an encore, you will know instinctively how to take it—and the Compiler very cordially wishes that you *may* get it.

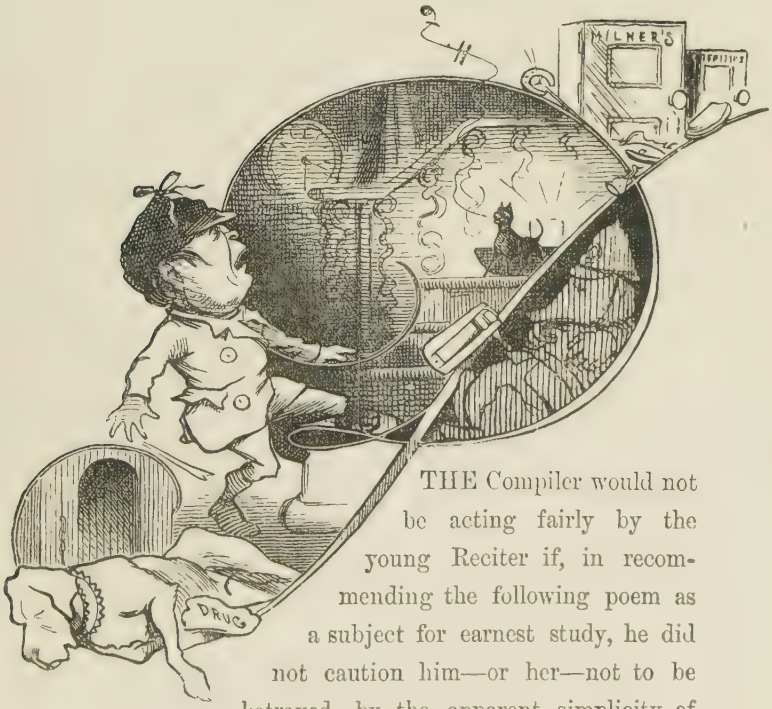
All has now been said that is necessary by way of prefatory remark, and we can accordingly proceed to practical work without further delay.


BREAD
AND
BUTTER

BURGLAR BILL.

EXAMPLE No. 1.

STYLE: *The "Sympathetic Artless."*



THE Compiler would not be acting fairly by the young Reciter if, in recommending the following poem as a subject for earnest study, he did not caution him—or her—not to be betrayed by the apparent simplicity of

this exercise into the grave error of under-estimating its real difficulty.

It is true that it is an illustration of Pathos of an elementary order (we shall reach the advanced kind at a later stage), but, for all that, this piece bristles with as many points as a porcupine, and consequently requires the most cautious and careful handling.

Upon the whole, it is perhaps better suited to students of the softer sex.

Announce the title with a suggestion of shy innocence—in this way :

BURGLAR [*now open both eyes very wide*] BILL.

[*Then go on in a hushed voice, and with an air of wonder at the world's iniquity.*

I.

Through a window in the attic,
Brawny Burglar Bill has crept ;
Seeking stealthily a chamber
Where the jewellery is kept.

[*Pronounce either "jewelry" or "joolery," according to taste.*

II.

He is furnished with a "jemmy,"
Centre-bit, and carpet-bag,
For the latter "comes in handy,"
So he says, "to stow the swag."

["*Jemmy*," "*centre-bit*," "*carpet-bag*," *are important words —put good colouring into them.*

III.

Here, upon the second landing,
He, secure, may work his will;
Down below 's a dinner party,
Up above—the house is still.

[*Here start and extend first finger, remembering to make it waggle slightly, as from fear.*

IV.

Suddenly—in spell-bound horror,
All his satisfaction ends—
For a little white-robed figure
By the banister descends !

[*This last line requires care in delivery, or it may be imagined that the little figure is sliding* DOWN *the banisters, which would simply ruin the effect. Note the bold but classic use of the singular in "banister," which is more pleasing to a nice ear than the plural.*

V.

Bill has reached for his revolver,
[*Business here with your fan.*
Yet—he hesitates to fire . . .
Child is it ? [*in a dread whisper*] or—apparition,
That provokes him to perspire ?

VI.

Can it be his guardian angel,
Sent to stay his hand from crime ?
[*In a tone of awe.*

He could wish she had selected
Some more seasonable time!
[*Touch of peevish discontent here.*

VII.

"Go away!" he whimpers hoarsely,
"Burglars hev their bread ter earn.
I don't need no Gordian angel
Givin' of me sech a *turn!*"
[*Shudder here, and retreat, shielding eyes with hand.*
[*Now change your manner to a naïve surprise; this, in spite of anything we may have said previously, is in this particular instance* NOT *best indicated by a shrill falsetto.*

VIII.

But the blue eyes open wider,
Ruby lips reveal their pearl;
[*This must not be taken to refer to the Burglar.*
"I is not a Garden anzel,
Only—dust a yickle dirl!
[*Be particularly artless here and through next stanza.*

IX.

"On the thtairs to thit I'm doin'
Till the tarts and dellies tum;
Partinthon (our Butler) alwayth
Thaves for Baby Bella thome!

X.

"Poor man, 'oo is yookin' 'ungwy—
Leave 'oo burgling fings up dere;

Tum viz me and share the sweeties,
Thitting on the bottom thtair ! "

[*In rendering the above the young Reciter should strive to be idiomatic without ever becoming idiotic—which is not so easy as might be imagined.*

XI.

" Reely, Miss, you must excoose me ! "
Says the Burglar with a jerk :

[*Indicate embarrassment here by smoothing down the folds of your gown, and swaying awkwardly.*

" Dooty calls, and time is pressing ;
I must set about my work ! "

[*This with a gruff conscientiousness.*

XII.

[*Now assume your wide-eyed innocence again.*

" Is 'oo work to bweak in houses ?
Nana *told* me so, I'm sure !
Will 'oo see if 'oo tan manage
To bweak in my *doll's-house* door ?

XIII.

" I tan *never* det it undone,
So my dollies tan't det out ;
They don't *yike* the fwont to open
Evewy time they'd walk about !

XIV.

" Twy, and—if 'oo does it nithely—
When I'm thent upthtairs to thleep,

[*Don't overdo the lisp.*

I will bwing 'oo up thome doodies,
'Oo thall have them all—to keep ! "

XV.

[*Pause here ; then, with intense feeling and sympathy—*
Off the little "angel" flutters ;
[*Delicate stress on "angel."*
But the Burglar—wipes his brow.
He is wholly unaccustomed
To a kindly greeting now !
[*Tremble in voice here.*

XVI.

Never with a smile of welcome
Has he seen his entrance met !
Nobody—except a policeman—[*bitterly*]
Ever wanted *him* as yet !

XVII.

Many a stately home he's entered,
But, with unobtrusive tact,
He has ne'er, in paying visits,
Called attention to the fact.

XVIII.

Gain he counts it, on departing,
Should he have avoided strife.
[*In tone of passionate lament—*
Ah, my Brothers, but the Burglar's
Is a sad, a lonely life !

XIX.

All forgotten now the jewels,
Once the purpose of his "job";
Down he sinks upon the door-mat,
With a deep and choking sob.

XX.

Then, the infant's plea recalling,
Seeks the nursery above;
Looking for the Lilliputian
Crib he is to crack—for *love!*
[*It is more usually done for* MONEY.

XXI.

In the corner stands the doll's-house,
Gaily painted green and red;
[*Colouring again here.*
And its door declines to open,
Even as the child has said!

XXII.

Forth come centre-bit and jemmy: [*Briskly.*
All his implements are plied;
[*Enthusiastically—*
Never has he burgled better!
As he feels, with honest pride.

XXIII.

Deftly is the task accomplished,
For the door will open well;

When—a childish voice behind him
Breaks the silence—like a bell.

XXIV.

"Sank 'oo, Misser Burglar, sank 'oo!
And, betause 'oo's been so nice,
See what I have dot—a tartlet!
Gweat big gweedies ate the ice."
[*Resentful accent on "ate."*

XXV.

"Pappa says he wants to see 'oo,
Partinthon is tummin too—
Tan't 'oo wait?"
[*This with guileless surprise—then change to a husky emotion.*
—"Well, *not* this evenin',
So, my little dear,—[*brusquely*], adoo!"

XXVI.

[*You are now to produce your greatest effect; the audience should be made actually to* SEE *the poor hunted victim of social prejudice escaping, consoled in the very act of flight by memories of this last adventure—the one bright and cheering episode, possibly, in his entire professional career.*
Fast he speeds across the housetops!—
[*Rapid delivery for this.*
[*Very gently.*] But his bosom throbs with bliss,

For upon his rough lips linger
Traces of a baby's kiss.

[*Most delicate treatment will be necessary in the last couplet —or the audience may understand it in a painfully literal sense.*

* * * * *

[*You have nothing before you now but the finale. Make the contrast as marked as possible.*

XXVII.

Dreamily on downy pillow
[*Soft musical intonation for this.*
Baby Bella murmurs sweet:
[*Smile here with sleepy tenderness.*
"Burglar—tum adain, and thee me . . .
I will dive 'oo cakes to eat!"

[*That is one side of the medal—now for the other.*

XXVIII.

[*Harsh but emotional.*
In a garret, worn and weary,
Burglar Bill has sunk to rest,
Clasping tenderly a damson-
Tartlet to his burly breast.

[*Dwell lovingly upon the word "tartlet"—which you should press home upon every one of your hearers, remembering to fold your hands lightly over your heart as you conclude. If you do not find that several susceptible and eligible bachelors have been knocked completely out of time by this little recitation, you will have made less progress in your Art than may be confidently anticipated.*

JUNIPER JEM.

EXAMPLE No. 2.

STYLE: *The "Sporting-Sensational."*

ANY effusion, however mediocre in itself, that treats of some incident in which the Horse is a prominent figure is tolerably certain to excite the throb of enthusiasm in the bosoms of an average British audience. Nor will the attainment of this very gratifying result be appreciably affected by the mere fact that the author's acquaintance with equine matters is neither profound nor even accurate.

But the Compiler of this little Manual happens to be tormented by a conscientiousness which is almost morbid, and impels him to incur any expense rather than expose his confiding pupils to the slightest risk of encountering ridicule.

Accordingly the little poem which forms the subject of this study has been submitted for revision to a gentleman whose absolute infallibility upon all topics connected with the Turf is sufficiently vouched for by his position as Sporting Prophet upon one of our leading daily papers.

The stage-directions are of course our own. The Student may make an appropriate and effective entrance by coming on in top-boots and a jockey-cap, and will help his reading immensely by flourishing a whip (with judgment) at intervals.

Announce your title with less modesty than in the previous study—thus :

JUNIPER [*pause*] JEM.

[*Then flick your right boot with the whip, and dash impetuously at the first line.*]

I.

Yes ! [*aggressively, as if somebody had just implied that it wasn't.*] Steeple-chasing is stirring sport—and the most exciting events of all

Are at Purlingham Park, when the field is large, and the ditches deep, and the fences tall,

And I for one shall never forget—till my brain is blurred
and my eyes are dim,
[*Pass hand over brow and blink, with just a suggestion of pathos.*
The day that Dot and Go One was steered by an infant
hero—[*with a burst of candour*]—Juniper Jem!
[*Quieter explanatory manner for next two lines.*

II.

Robert Roper was down to ride, and we'd backed his mount,
for he knew the course,
And, Gad! he'd have managed to romp in first if they put
him up on a rocking-horse!
But out of the paddock the horses filed—and a murmur ran:
"It is Roper's *son!*
Why, where the dickens can Robert be, that he's not in
charge of Dot and Go One?"

III.

And the devotees of "The Ring and the Book" said many
a swear as they saw the lad:
While some declared that the bets were off; and all con-
sidered the outlook bad.
For Dot and Go One—though a grand old gee—was a trifle
groggy in wind and limb,
And we feared he would never run up to his form, with a
child on his back like Juniper Jem.
[*Shake your head apprehensively.*

IV.

Now Roper, it happened, was under a cloud, and the Stewards had given him notice to quit,
For [*apologetically*] a little artistic "arrangement in oils" he'd endeavoured to paint on the favourite's bit.
"They might ha' waited!" his trainer cried, "and warned him off when the race was run,
For where's the party to take his place, and perform as pilot to Dot and Go One?" [*Gaze round room despairingly.*

V.

[*Lower key.*] And the silence answered—for no one spoke, till—[*brighten up here*]—just as the last faint hope had gone—
Came [*in a tone of wondering pity*] a chit of seven, and said: "I'll try! [*Pathetically*] I am only a child, but—[*with modest confidence*]—I *can* stick on!
See, I've donned my father's jacket and cap—his cords encircle my legs so slim,
They are undersized, [*with childish frankness*] I was nursed on gin—which is why they call me Juniper Jem.

VI.

"But, in spite of my size and my tender years, though I've seldom been on a horse before,
I'll keep in the saddle, whatever befalls—and the finest horseman can do no more!
And the simple boon that I crave of you, when the post is passed and my duty done,
Is—my father's Pardon!" [*Pause: then impulsively*] . . . "A Bargain, boy!" [*Second pause—then quietly*] so they hoisted him up on Dot and Go One.

VII.

[*Historic Present for following stanzas. Let your delivery be rapid, brilliant, illustrated, graphic, sporting,* AND *dramatic—and you can't possibly fail.*

He has come into line with the pick of the field; with the chestnut, the bay, and the strawberry roan,

[*With air of gradual identification.*

The Stiff'un, and Catsmeat, Polonia's Pride, and Titupping Tommy, and Second Trombone.

Now they're off with a jump at the fall of the flag, and the heather-topped hurdles [*Do mind your h's here, or you may come a cropper over these hurdles*] they airily skim.

But the boy! [*Bend forward and strain your eyes eagerly—then with irrepressible enthusiasm*] Like a leech to the pigskin he sticks! And we shout to him, "Bravo, Juniper Jem!"

["*Brio*" *here—if you can manage it, and know what it is.*

VIII.

One's down! it is Catsmeat, [*excitedly*] she's made a mistake—she has touched her timber, she's into the ditch!

See, little Bill Larrup is getting the lead, and urging The Stiff'un with spur and with switch,

[*Work both arms here like a jockey, or a large bird.*

But [*in trembling accents*] we haven't the heart to look at the child—why, it's Gunter's shop to a penny bun

We shall see him off at the Water-jump!—for he doesn't seem happy on Dot and Go One!

IX.

[*Lower your voice; intense anxiety, vivid facial expression, all your features working hard.*

They are close at it now, and [*groan*] his stirrups are lost—and—merciful powers! what *is* he about?

[*Agonised glance at front row of audience here.*

There! what did I *tell* you? the pair of 'em in—and it's odds if a pair of 'em ever come out!

But—[*pointing*]—wonder of wonders! look—Dot and Go One has scrambled out—and on top of him,

Damp and draggled, but sticking tight, [*laugh here hysterically*] like a game little limpet, is Juniper Jem!

X.

Coughing and wheezing they canter on; there's an awkward post and rails to be passed,

See, The Stiff'un has shirked—he refuses . . . twice—and the second time little Bill Larrup is grassed.

'Tis the boy's turn now—and we hold our breath, and we watch for the daylight . . . [*Pause.*

[*With a cry of delighted astonishment.*] By Jove! there's *none*

'Twixt the baggy buckskins of Juniper Jem, and the slippery saddle of Dot and Go One!

[*Quiet down again.*

XI.

And the gallant grey is galumphing on, like the scion true of a rare old stock,

(For isn't he brother to Creepie Stool, and stable-companion to Golden Crock?)

There's a brook in front—but he plunges in and strikes out boldly—he's game to swim.

[*Not that horses* DO *strike out—in the water at least—but what does it matter in a Recitation?*]

And he's shaking himself on the opposite side—but he can't shake off young Juniper Jem!

XII.

There are only a couple ahead of him now, and he shambles up with his raking stride;

And the poor old Trombone's beginning to blow, as he pants in the rear of Polonia's Pride.

She is over the five-foot fence like a frog—but the Trombone's down, and out of the fun;

[*Put both hands to mouth, and yell*] Now—*cram* him at it, Juniper Jem!

[*Relieved.*] Well, he's done it *somehow*, on Dot and Go One!

XIII.

One more—and the finish. They're neck and neck. [*With acute disgust.*] Why, hang it *all*—they will muff the mound!

Polonia's Pride goes down on her knees, [*Joy*] and our noble grey has his nose to the ground! [*Horror.*]

[*Pause—then in triumph.*] But he's up the first—with the boy on his back, though we cannot call his condition trim,

[*Dubiously.*] And he certainly *has* a peculiar seat—but he sticks to the saddle, does Juniper Jem!

XIV.

There's a roar from the Ring, and a shout from the Stand,
as they bucket by with a final burst;
For the mare is beaten by half a head, and the clever old
grey is at home the first!
And the crowd are cheering the pallid child, as he capless
sits in the burning sun,
"Hip, hip, hooray! for the infant pluck that has scored a
win with Dot and Go One!"

XV.

But the boy replies with a gentle smile: [*Keep this very sweet and modest.*] "I thank you all—I have done my part,
Now I claim the guerdon—a Father's name is dear indeed
to his Offspring's heart!"
[*Very tender and sympathetic for this next line.*
And the very Stewards are softened now, and the unshed
tears to their eyelids brim,
As they pardon Roper his little ruse, for the sake of their
promise to Juniper Jem.

XVI.

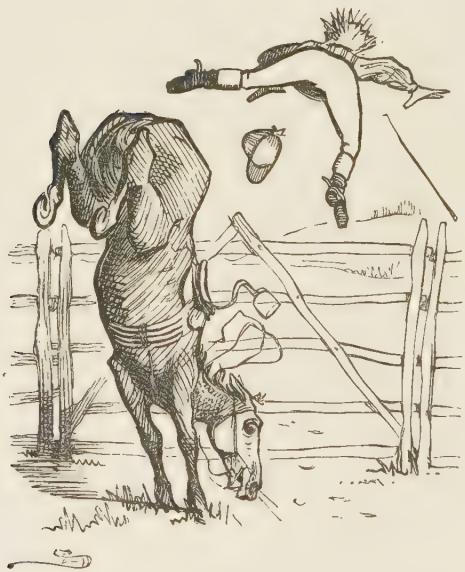
Then we all of us rush to embrace the lad, and to lift him
down—[*In a tone of extreme surprise*]—But we strain
our backs!
And the child explains, with a simple glee, that he's rubbed
the saddle with cobbler's wax.
[*Pause—then in challenge.*

"With such a precaution," the cynic sneers, "what danger was there—to seek or shun?"

[*Affect to ponder over this objection for a moment, and then dismiss it with a ringing inflection of good-humoured contempt.*

Well—the answer to *that* is—Try it yourself—at Purlingham Park, on Dot and Go One!

[*If you cannot bring the house down with this, you had better give up reciting altogether, and come out at a matinée as Hamlet.*]



FILIAL LITTLE FRANK.

EXAMPLE No. 3.

STYLE : *The "Tearladen-Domestic."*

THIS example is a sweet but studiously simple little piece, and is particularly recommended to young beginners who contemplate making a drawing-room *début*. An unmarried lady under forty, with tears in her voice, may attack this poem with the certainty of producing a deep impression, as it is pitched in precisely the vein of Infantine Pathos which never fails to move an audience of any susceptibility.

In reciting, as in conducting all offensive operations, an effective beginning goes a long way towards ensuring ultimate victory ; and on this important

subject a few hints may be offered which are of general as well as particular application.

We will suppose the Reciter, then, to be standing on the hearth-rug facing the audience, which he should do with a mixture of deference and defiance.

You wait with your eyes cast down, as if absorbed in severe contemplation, until the buzz has subsided, when you should look up suddenly, and appear to perceive the audience for the first time. Then, in a distinct but slightly apologetic tone, you should announce the title as though it had only just occurred to you—

FILIAL LITTLE FRANK.

[*A short pause before you start, and remember that the first line is supposed to be uttered by a child of tender years.*

"Oh, Mummy, where's Pupsy gone to? I want him so!"
said the child;
With his angel face and his clustering curls, and his eyes so
blue and so mild.

[*This is the description of the child—not of Pupsy, and should therefore be given in your natural tone.*

"For many a day he has been away, and the very last time
he was seen
Was by Mary Ann—when he left in the van that was sent
for him, by the Queen!"

[*Voice raised at "Queen," with a touch of innocent delight at this exhibition of royal condescension.*

[*For the next stanza you must summon all the sympathy you have about you. Your tone should be agitated by a passionate tremolo.*

Can the Mother inform her darling that the Parent he thus deplores

Has been charged with pocketing pickles at the Army and Navy Stores!

He was somewhat inclined to absence of mind—which *might* have accounted for that—

[*This last line almost hopefully, and then, as you suddenly recall other elements in the case, sink your voice and shake your head with an air of reluctant conviction.*

But *not* for the jar of preserved caviare, and the collared brawn in his hat!

[*Now you are to indicate the suppressed emotion of the Mother, whose mental agony can be vividly suggested by rolling your eyes and twisting your handkerchief.*

"Oh, hush, my own little Frankie! [*forced cheerfulness*] Pupsy's Her Majesty's Guest,

And, while she desires his attendance, he's *bound* to obey her behest!"

[*Child again; with a slow smile of dawning intelligence; you may find this difficult—practise it.*

"Then . . . . if *I* do as *he*, will the Queen invite *me* to go to Papa, and her Palace see?"

And the Mother sighs "Yes"—for she dare not confess the assumption is based on a fallacy!

[*Bow your head here in choked resignation. Now continue in brisker vein as narrator:*

But the mystified Frankie pondered: what had his father *done*
To deserve such an invitation? He questioned many a one;
And, from all he heard, the child inferred—should he stone a suburban train,
Or do *anything* naughty—then (if he was caught) he would soon see his Pupsy again!

[*Brisker still for following stanza.*

So he wandered down to the railway, and there, on the platform, he came
To a curious kind of contrivance—I cannot remember its name—

[*This with a fine carelessness, which can be easily rendered by a backward jerk of the left hand.*

But there is a slit in the middle of it, and, when you've inserted your coin,
A mild cigarette, or some toffee, you get—whiche'er you experience joy in.

[*The rhyme here is, perhaps, the least bit forced—though not more than is allowable in a Recitation—still, do not insist too much upon it. Now work up the excitement for the next stanza. Gallant spirited delivery.*

Here was the means before him of rejoining his parent at last!
And his eyes at the thought shone brighter, and his breath came thick and fast;
'Twas a desperate feat such an engine to cheat—but the prize! He had centred his soul in it!
And he'd plenty of string, and—most fortunate thing!—a penny, possessing a hole in it!

[*Make your "string" rather prolonged; express a naïve delight in "fortunate;" and see that your "penny" comes out with a ring, otherwise it may fall flat. For next stanza resume your quieter historic style.*

Well; he fastened the string to his penny—and again and again it dropped,

Till the toffee was all exhausted, and then—the machinery stopped,

And the fraud was perceived, though the child was relieved, having never intended to cadge his treat!

[*Laugh a light-hearted little laugh here.*

But B 32 said [*cold-blooded sneer for this*], "I'd recommend *you* to reserve your remarks for the Magistrit!"

[*Now comes your great opportunity; let out the latent sob in your voice, make your audience feel with you the eternal irony that attends all youthful illusions.*

Alas! for his childish fancy! for the Bench [*a quiver here*] was cruel and cold:

It did not believe little Frankie, and the artless tale that he told!

His high-minded deed was put down to the greed of a little unprincipled urchin,

[*Sink your voice here in pain.*

And a brutal official (paid extra to swish all) was ordered—to bring the new birch in!

[*Gaze upward now with a rapt expression, as of one beholding a vision in the chandelier.*

So Frankie—failed; for they sent him home. But will it be *always* thus?

Ah, no! [*break into a gradual smile of tender ecstasy*] for he, too, will be fetched one day by the Royal Omnibus,

[*Reverently here.*

And a cry of joy from a radiant boy will echo through Holloway-yard :

[*The innocent, childish voice again for last line raised in gleeful exultation.*

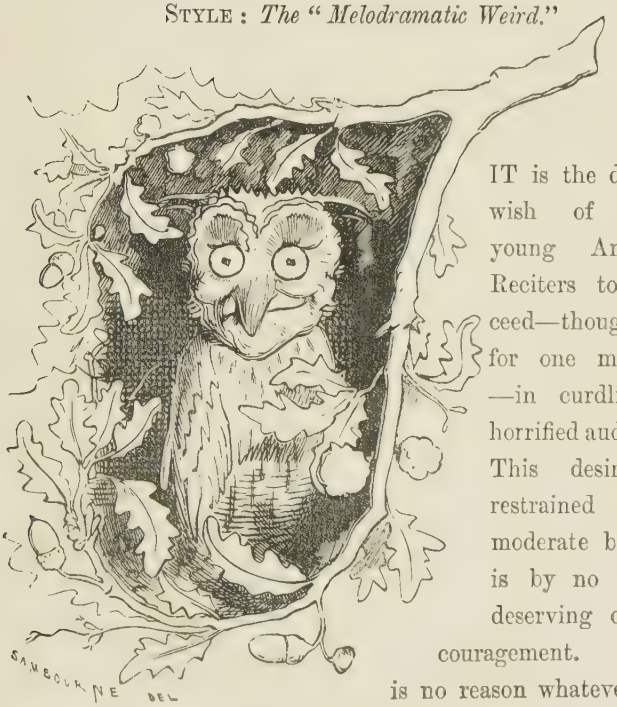
" Oh, Pupsy ! see . . . She has sent for me ; and I'm here for a fortnight's ' hard ' ! "

Until you have actually recited these lines in public, you can have no idea of the extraordinary effect they are capable of producing.

THE CONSCIENCE-CURST!

EXAMPLE No. 4.

STYLE: *The "Melodramatic Weird."*



IT is the dearest wish of most young Amateur Reciters to succeed—though but for one moment—in curdling a horrified audience. This desire, if restrained within moderate bounds, is by no means deserving of discouragement. There is no reason whatever why audiences should not be curdled—provided they do not

personally object to this form of dissipation. The only danger is that he who goes forth to curdle may excite nothing more than a mild amusement, which, to all intents and purposes, amounts practically to a failure in Art. However, the Student may dismiss any gloomy anticipations of this kind in the case of the present piece, on condition, of course, that the accompanying directions are implicitly followed in public, for, unless the pupil is willing to submit to our method, we cannot guarantee him even a moderate degree of success.

As before, you should devote special attention to your title, which may be announced after this fashion. Stalk into the middle of the room or platform, with one hand in your bosom, and your eyes staring as in a trance. Then, in a hollow voice, hurl the name of the poem at the nearest old lady :

THE CONSCIENCE-CURST!

[*And, if you do it properly, she will jump like anything.*

I.

The night-owl shrieked : a gibbous moon peered pallid o'er the yew ;
The clammy tombstones each distilled a dank unwholesome dew ; [*Shudder here with your shoulders.*
As through the sleeping village passed a wight of aspect weird,
Whose haggard face was half obscured by a long neglected beard.

[*In order that the audience should grasp this idea, you should pass your hand lightly over your chin.*

II.

His tinted spectacles gave back the gleaming of the moon,
He wore a pair of overcoats, although the time was June.
[*Give a dark significance to this piece of apparent eccentricity.*
Two slippers wrought in faded wools hid his ungainly feet,
And he danced a grisly polka-step all down the silent street.
[*You might just indicate this, if you think you can do so in a sufficiently ghastly and impressive manner; otherwise—don't.*

III.

Then, by the village green, he gave a conscience-stricken jump,
As guiltily he gazed upon the Presentation Pump!
[*Start here, as if you had just observed a centipede upon the carpet.*
"How like," he muttered with a groan, "my uncle as he slept!"
Then raised its handle reverently—but found it cold, and wept.
[*In last line bend slightly forward with extended hand, then allow your arm to drop lifelessly to your side, and bow your head twice, very solemnly. We have seen this most effective in other pieces.*

IV.

The rural Policeman [*raise voice at "Policeman," with a confidential look at audience*], on his round perceived the Stranger grim;

"I'd better step across," he thought, "an' hev a talk with him. [*Country accent for this.*
It doan't sim nateral nohow as pumps should prompt such grief,
'Ere, what be you about?" said he, [*Pause; then in a hollow voice*—] "Confession brings relief!"

V.

The Stranger answered, with a smile that froze his hearer's blood, [*Try to do this smile yourself.*
Then down he sank upon the stones with a dull and heavy thud,
The hearse-plume nodding in his hat as he inclined his head,
"Full long," he wailed, "upon this heart the worm hath banqueted!"

VI.

(A drifting scud had veiled the moon, and sicklier she shone
As he began:) "You never knew, methinks, my Uncle John?
A better, aye, a bulkier man this earth has hardly seen—
He was the first that ever burst a 'Try-your-weight' machine!"

[*A melancholy pride as you mention this.*

VII.

"And *I*" [*with a smile full of misery*], "Ah, me! a careless lad, I sported at his side,

That was before a kinsman's gore these felon hands had dyed! [*Look disparagingly at your hands.*

Before the stain was on my brow, that sickens as it shames! [*Gesture of loathing.*

Ere yet my knife had let the life from gentle Uncle James!

VIII.

"His blameless days were spent within the neighbourhood of York;

A dentist (so at least 'twas noised), a connoisseur in pork.

[*Tender stress on last word.*

Ah! could I have predicted then that *I* should deal a blow

Upon the highly-polished head of generous Uncle Joe!

IX.

"Now Uncle Joseph sold ('purvey,' I think, he termed it) meat,

His veins with vital fluid were abnormally replete!

[*Close your eyes, and shiver here, as if at some unpleasing reminiscence.*

"Who would have thought so old a man—?" . . . [*with a dazed abruptness*] "Enough!—Within the tank

I flung the still unconscious corse of my favourite Uncle—Frank!

[*Here you should strike the attitude of a man who is hurling a favourite uncle to his doom.*

X.

"My Uncle Francis was a man to know, was to esteem.
At times I hear him coughing yet—ah! only in a dream!
Is that a step behind the pump? [*Nervous movement.*
Nay, craven heart, be still!
[*Hand clutching side, cowering attitude.*
Till I have told how, for his gold"—[*bitter emphasis on "gold," as if it had turned out, on the whole, less than you were given to expect*]—"I struck down Uncle Bill!"

XI.

[*A slight pause here. Some amateurs would pull down their cuffs at this point; but we cannot recommend this method of fixing an audience's attention: it is a little inartistic.*
A stolid but attentive eye on him the Policeman fixed:
"It seems to me as how," said he, "you've got your uncles mixed!"
A ray of recollection seemed the Stranger's brain to strike;
[*Both hands to forehead.*
"Perchance!" he owned; "they were," he moaned, "so wondrously alike!
[*Here you should allow your eyes to wander wildly round the room before beginning the next line, which should be given with a pathetic effort to be calm and collected.*

XII.

"But let me recapitulate my catalogue of crime!—
Old Uncle Robert"— [*Complete alteration of manner here.*
—Hastily alleging, "Want of time,"

The hearer fled. "My gloomy tale the rustic soul alarms,"
The Stranger mused .... That night he slept—within the
Railway Arms!

The last line is full of the deepest suggestion, so do not slur over its full significance. Owing to a certain strain of mysticism in some of the lines, you may find that your audience does not quite understand this Recitation on a first hearing; but of course if you detect any symptoms of this, you can always offer, like Mrs. Leo Hunter, to recite it again.

A COSTER'S CONVERSION.

EXAMPLE No. 5.

STYLE: *The "Low Life Realistic."*

WHEN a young man with a marked tendency to mildness challenges admiration by reciting in public, he should — and, to do him justice, he generally does — select a piece as foreign to his natural disposition as possible. This, while it makes a little change for him, will afford his friends the liveliest enjoyment. And so the poem which serves as the present example has been expressly designed to meet the requirements of any Student who may be suffering from mildness in a latent or pronounced form. To such it offers possibilities

well nigh unbounded. The Compiler is not greatly troubled by the fear that its diction and sentiments will be condemned on the ground of coarseness. Coarse they undoubtedly are —but then the nature of the subject renders that inevitable: the story is supposed to be related by a costermonger, and costermongers, although charming persons in their own line, are not exactly Chesterfields. True Art is ever naturalistic, and you need not be afraid in reciting this piece of being as vulgar as you possibly can.

Only there is this one caution to be observed—you should make it quite evident that the character you are sustaining is merely an assumed one, for, by a curious paradox, vulgarity only pleases so long as it is believed to be an affectation.

But perhaps there is no real danger that you will so completely lose your identity as to produce any painful amount of illusion, and you may let yourself go with perfect security.

It is just possible, however, that even the mildest amateur Reciter may find some of the lines a trifle too vigorous for delivery in the suburbs and provinces, and the author can only say that, on receiving any intimation to that effect (accompanied by postage stamps), he shall be happy to forward, post free, alternative stanzas in which even suburban susceptibilities shall find nothing of an objectionable nature.

In going on to deliver this recitation, you should make some slight alterations in your evening dress, such as turning up the ends of your trousers, knotting a silk wrapper round your neck, and wearing your coat inside out. It is true that even then you will not have completely hit off the dis-

tinctive garb of the typical costermonger, but the disguise will serve to give you confidence and produce the proper degree of illusion. Announce your title with a boisterous bluffness :

A COSTER'S CONVERSION.

[*Then clear your throat and proceed.*]

I.

So yer want me to tell yer about it ? Well, yer don't seem
a bad sort o' bloke :

[*This is addressed to the imaginary second person.*

Set down on the hedge o' my barrer—and mind yer don't
tip up the moke !

["*Moke*," *as you may be aware, is a donkey—in the present case of course invisible, and supposed to be harnessed to an unseen barrow. These little details impart a greater vividness to the thing.*

Yer kin stand me a drain when I'm done, if yer *like*, as the
public is 'andy by,

And this 'ere is a yarn as I never could spin 'ithout gettin'
'usky and dry !

II.

I'm a rough kind o' cove, but it's bin my pride as I've led a
regular life,

Bein' niver too tight of a Saturday night but what I kin
wallop the wife.

In liquor I'm allus light 'arted, and fling things about pretty
free,

For a 'ardworkin' man at the end o' the week—well, he must 'ave a bit of a spree!

[*If it is intended to do this in Clapham or Brixton, write for alternative verse.*

III.

So we lived werry 'appy together fur nigh upon fifteen year;
And our 'ome was a bloomin' 'umble 'ome—but the 'umblest 'ome kin be dear!

[*Rough pathos; the epithet "bloomin'" is a little crude (for Camberwell), but you can go round and apologise for it afterwards.*

And I got that sweet on the place, sir, that—there, you may call it strange!
If yer'd orfered me Buckinim Pallis, I'm blest if I think I'd change! [*Slap your knee with suppressed feeling.*

IV.

Then, hall on a suddin', my thoughts got turned the t'other way about;
Fur I come on one o' them Soshalist chaps, as stand at corners and spout.
"O Feller-workers and Friends!" sez he, "Serciety's rotten an' holler!
Think o' yer comfitless 'omes," he sez, "and yer lives as is spent in squoller!

V.

"Then think o' the gorgeous gilded rooms that's howned by the bloated rich,
As crams 'em with hobjects of Culcher an' Hart—*you'll* never set heyes on sich,

Them Swells is a wasteful, extravagant lot—as you'll jedge
for yerselves when you hear,
That they spends on soap in a single week what 'ud keep you
a fortnight in beer ! "

VI.

Well, he jawed away, till I seed quite clear—what I'd
never believed till then—
That the 'ome as I'd bin so proud on was honly a 'orrible
den !
'Ow could it hever be anythink else but poverty-stricken
and sordid,
When there wasn't not one of them luxuries there of which
I 'ad been defrorded ?
[*Render this with passion, but with a suggestion at the same
time that your mood has changed since.*

VII.

For many a day, as I thought this hout, I'd take and cry
like a child,
And the light seemed all blowed out o' my life, and its
innercent pleasures spiled ;
And the longer I went on livin' the lower my sperrits sunk,
Till the Missus's eyes warn't black fur a month—for I 'adn't
no art to git drunk !
[*This is a true and pathetic touch—but not recommended
for Peckham.*

VIII.

I reely believe, if I 'adn't bin roused, I was well on the
road to ruin,

But I felt as I *must* make a heffort some'ow—so I give a copper a doin',
As 'ad said my barrer was blockin' the way, and they took me afore a beak,
And he see what I wanted was change o' hair, so he sent me to quod fur a week.

[*A pause here, to mark the dawn of a new era.*

IX.

Well, when I came out at the hend o' my time, I felt like a haltered cove,
And back, with a chastened art, I sped to my hattic in Lisson Grove ;
And I clambered up by the crazy stair, and I softly hopened the door—
Then I started back . . .

[*This is your highest dramatic light. Work it up.*

. . . . There was nothink there the same as I'd seen afore !

X.

I couldn't think fur the turn I'd got, 'cept wonderin'—What did it mean ?
It made me shiver and shake for fright.

[*Drop your voice to a hushed whisper.*

—fur the blessed floor was *clean !*
But I wentured in ; though I rubbed my heyes, fur darned if it didn't seem
That either I couldn't be right in my 'ed, or was in some 'orrible dream !

[*Take breath, then continue in tone of concentrated horror.*

XI.

Fur the room was painted a light pea-green (which the same is a culler I 'ates !)
And on 'ooks, where you couldn't get at 'em, was 'anging up blue and white plates !
The mantelpiece had a petticut on—and, hup on the winder-sill,
Was a mug o' nascissors, as smelt that loud it werry nigh turned me ill !

XII.

Then the door was a dollop o' Japanese fans, and the cup-board was gashly white,
And hover it some 'un 'ad sprinkled a job-lot o' spadgers in flight !
A thing as they calls a "dodo" on the walls was a runnin' round,
And my old gal was a settin' asleep, in a ruebub-cullered gownd !

XIII.

In my hown arm-cheer, as they'd given a coat of horiential red,
And a big humberella was upside down on the ceilink over her 'ed !
[*Try here to realise how excessively all this would be calculated to annoy a Costermonger.*
Well, I routed 'er up in a second, and I sez : "*You* 're a nice cup o' tea ! [*Coarse again, but characteristic—risk it.*
This 'ere is a pretty condition o' things fur your 'usban' to come in and see !

XIV.

"With yer wickerwork cheers, and yer potted plants, and these 'ere little three-leggèd stools!

[*Intense disgust here.*

D'yer think *I'm* a-goin' to set in a place as is ony fit for tom-fools?"

"Why, Bill," she says, "I should never ha' thought as you'd fly in a tearin' passion,

Cause a kind old lady's took in her 'ed fur to do us up in the fashion!

XV.

"She thought it was jest what yer wanted so, and she never meant to insult yer,

For this 'ere 's luxoorious comfort, Bill,—it 's what them 'asetics' calls Cultyer!

See, these little hoccasional tables is fur arternoon tea and chat,

Or fur, when a gen'lman's calling, to put down his chimley-pot 'at.

XVI.

"Them plates is considered 'so decora-tive,' likewise is the pots and pans,

But I can't recollect the partickler use of the humberella and fans."

"I dessay it's werry genteel," sez I, "but my notion o' comfort it ain't,

To live in a litter o' stuff like this 'ud aggerawate a saint!

XVII.

"I fancy I sees myself fallin' about when I've taken an extry drop,
And a breakin' my shins, like a bloomin' bull in a blessed chiney-shop!
I'll not 'ave none of it, Betsy," I sez—and I chucked the lot of it out,
And I didn't recover my self-respeck till I see it go up the spout! [*Give this line with a manly independence.*

XVIII.

For we all on us has our feelings, Sir, and my pride it was cruel 'urt,
To think as a swell could ha' gone so far as to rob a poor man of his dirt!
But I never 'anker for Culcher now, nor henvy no harristocrats,
For I'm cured fur life o' the longing I 'ad fur a roomful of brick-a-bats.
Of spadgers and pea-green paint you'll find in the attic 'ardly a trace,
And, when me and my old woman 'as words—there's allus plenty o' space!

* * * * *

It has been urged upon the author that the true result of such an incident as this would be the instant redemption and refinement of the hero by the gentle influences of his altered surroundings. This is undeniable, but it is not always advisable to carry Realism to its full lengths—our ending is unquestionably the more artistic.

HASDRUBAL JOPP.

EXAMPLE No. 6.

STYLE : *The "Transatlantic Familiar."*

NO young Reciter can consider his repertory complete unless it includes a poem in the Californian dialect, and in the metre with which a great American humorist has made us so pleasantly familiar. The Compiler could hardly instruct his pupils in the proper method of delivering any of the originals, however, without at the same time departing from the system he has prescribed to himself, and—which is of more consequence—taking a literary liberty that would lack all precedent and excuse.

Consequently, his only alternative was to construct a little piece in humble imitation of the poems he has

alluded to, in the hope that its necessarily spurious and defective character would at least render it more adapted to elocutionary treatment by beginners.

In spite of a seeming incongruity in the subject, it is quite possible that a young lady Reciter would make a certain sensation with this recitation, which is entitled :

HASDRUBAL JOPP.

The Reciter is this time supposed to be strolling along the Strand, facing the audience. The idea is that, as you come on, you are suddenly attracted by an advertisement borne by the last of a string of sandwich-men. You stop him, and then follows the recitation. By the way, as you are enacting an American, it may be as well to speak through your nose whenever it occurs to you. That is really all the dialect necessary.

I.

H'yur—you—bossing them boards !
Jess you hitch up a spell !
[*Rough good-nature expressed by forefinger.*
Don't go twiddling your cords, [*Impatiently.*
Lemme look at ye well.
[*Genial amusement.*
Why, I'm derned if ye don't look as skeered as a turtle
caught out of his shell !

II.

What's the style o' yer show ?
This yer pictur looks gay.

Why—ye don't tell me so!

[*With a naïve gratification.*

It 's a Murrican play!

And you mosey around with the posters—wa'al, now, do ye find the job *pay?*

III.

[*With a kindly curiosity.*

Say, what wuz it—Drink
As has led to it?—stop!
Wa'al—on'y to *think,*
Ef it isn't *his* shop!

This identical theerter as hires ye—Hev ye heerd on him?—Hasdrubal Jopp!

IV.

So ye *hev,* I declar!
Oh, it's likely the same,
Which I knew him out thar,

[*Indicate the United States by a vague jerk of your thumb.*

And I reckon it's *Fame,*

If a broken down blizzard like you (no offence!) kin look *so* at his name!

[*By the word "so" you should suggest a movement of pleased recognition on the part of the sandwich-man.*

V.

Can't ye stay for a while,
Till I 've opened my head?
So he 's gone an' struck ile,
Which the same 's what I said!

For I see him in "Fish outer Water," and sez I, [*sententiously*], "a Tragedian *bred!*"

VI.

[*Dreamily.*] Yes, I allays allowed
As he must make a hit ;
And not at all proud—
No, *Sir*—whole of him grit !
[*Affectionate pride here.*
Jess you wait till he hears *I'm* around—and you 'll see the reception I git !

VII.

For us two was sech chums
As ye won't often find :
Lord ! the way it all comes
Scrougin' back to my mind !
[*Abruptly.*
This dern sun is thet pesky an' strong, it 's enough fur to strike a man blind !
[*This is, of course, a mere pretext to conceal a not unmanly emotion—which is always indicated by drawing your right arm across the upper part of your nose.*

VIII.

A frechandeder cuss
Never stepped on a street ;
Why, he 'd raise such a fuss
When we happened ter meet
As I felt he 'd be hurt in his feelins ef he warn't not allowed to stand treat !

IX.

So he 's managed to climb
Ter the top of the tree ?
[*This with a homely disinterested gratification*

But I 'll bet every time,
[*Confident tenderness at "time."*
Big a boss as he be,
He remembers his pard out at Frisco—yes, he don't forgit little ole Me !

X.

[*At this your sandwich-man is supposed to make some sort of assent, which jars on your emotional mood. You show this by the sudden irritation in your tone.*
What on airth do you mean ?
By remarkin' "*you 're* sure
Of it" ? [*Half recognition, done by pinching the chin and staring.*] —seems like I 've seen
Those yer featurs afore ?
A mistake ? Well, then, just hold your hosses and don't interrup me no more ! [*This rather roughly.*

XI.

[*Now you should recover your geniality, and put out two detaining fingers, as if the sandwich-man was offering to withdraw.*
Come, you ain't goin' yet ?
H'yur, you lemme run on ;
Why, we've ony jest met,
And you want to be gone !
When I'm spilin' for want of a critter to practise chin-music upon !

XII.

So there's nary a doubt
As he's cock of the school,

And the stuffing's knocked out
Of your Irving and Toole ! [*Rapturous exultation.*
Jess ter think o' Jopp busting up Barrett—thar, call me a soft-hearted *fool !*

[*This time you are unable to conceal your emotion, and should employ a handkerchief stealthily ; the sandwich-man is equally affected—which surprises you.*

XIII.

Why, you *air* lookin' queer !
Derned ef *I* can see why.
Sho ! you thought 'twas a tear
As I'd got in my eye ?
No, I don't take no stock in hydraulics—it's on'y a dod-gasted fly !

[*Let your voice break at "fly," with a certain rugged shame at your own weakness, which you overcome with a gesture, and resume proudly—*

XIV.

He'll be chipper an' smart,
But, fur all that he's riz,
Jopp 'll open his heart—
And a bottle of fizz—
Right away when he sees me ! [*Here you seem to detect a glimmer of doubt in the sandwich-man's eye.*] High-toned, Sir ? you'd better believe that he *is !*

XV.

I ain't feared o' no change ;
Jopp 'll be jest as *true*——

[*Pull yourself up short, and gaze glassily before you into vacancy—then, in a husky whisper,*

Blame my cats! but it's strange . . .

[*Here the recognition has come at last—you take a step backwards.*

What in thunder! . . he's YOU!!!

[*Shout at* "YOU;" *then crestfallen,*

So ye're not on the boards, but between 'em? . . .

[*Change to hasty and confused apology.*

. . . Excuse me,—I've suthin' to do!

[*Go off hurriedly, with air of man who has just recollected an appointment.*

Should you do this with any dramatic force at all, you may reckon upon enlisting the sympathies of the audience for the severe disillusion you have suffered.

THE WOOING OF THE LADY AMABEL.

EXAMPLE No. 7.

STYLE : *The "Sensuously Harrowing."*

MOST young male Reciters cherish a secret persuasion that it has been peculiarly given to them to represent the varying phases of the feminine temperament in a manner equally truthful and pleasing. Mindful of this characteristic of theirs, the author has endeavoured in the present example to provide conscious talent with exceptional facilities for display. The young Reciter is hereby enabled to portray with all the marvellous fidelity at his command a highborn maiden in a situation of exquisite delicacy and embarrassment; he can work his hearers up to a pitch of tantalised impatience, otherwise known as "the fidgets," by the art with which he prolongs

and intensifies a mutual misunderstanding; and he can leave them with aching hearts, or in smiling relief—just as his tastes incline. And for all this the Compiler makes no extra charge; he is content to find his reward in the approving verdict of his own bosom, and the pupil is exhorted to cultivate a like philosophy, which he may not find altogether unnecessary. With this brief exordium, we will approach the study of our poem, which is entitled—

THE WOOING OF THE LADY AMABEL.

I.

In her boudoir, faintly perfumed by some sweet and subtle vapour,
With the lissome grace of indolence, lies Lady Amabel;
And from time to time her taper fingers plunge within a paper,
Whence they carry to her coral lips some happy caramel.

II.

'Tis a dainty well adapted to induce a sentimental
Train of thought; and soon her fancy fleets to young Sir Peveril
He is handsome, highbred, gentle [*in tone of dreamy reverie*]; figures five express his rental;
And—although he has not spoken yet—somehow, she thinks he *will!*

[*This last line with a maidenly archness. Do not trust too much to the inspiration of the moment for this expres-*

sion, which you will do well to rehearse carefully before a mirror—it is not by any means an easy effect—even for a male Reciter.

III.

Now she drops in charming girlish guilt the last romance from Mudie's—
For Sir Peveril has entered ! all his goodly face aglow
With reluctance to intrude, he's quite aware his conduct rude is—
But the Countess has assured him that he will not be *de trop !*

IV.

She whose mien would grace Princesses, now embodied awkwardnèss is ! [*With concerned wonder.*
And conceals, as might a village-maid, the blush she cannot quell ;
For his object here she guesses, but—although her answer "Yes" is—
[*In a confidential aside*] Like a limèd bird her fluttering tongue is clogged with caramel !

V.

[*Pause ; light narrative tone.*]
After many a lame apology for cutting short her reading,
Young Sir Peveril has summoned up his courage to begin,
And his passion now is pleading. From his tone of interceding
It is evident he fears her hand is difficult to win !
[*Air of dainty amusement at this uncalled-for diffidence*

VI.

So he all his eloquence employs—his eyes with ardour glisten,
Quite unconscious he's besieging a surrendered citadel!
[*Confidential aside again.*
But she cannot tell him this, unhappily, she can but listen,
[*Here indicate subdued facial contortion.*
Making frantic furtive efforts to absorb her caramel!

VII.

[*In deeper tones of manly passion.*]
"Nay, deem not that my burning words a boy's extravagance are,
For I love you with a passion that my tongue would fail to tell! [*Place hand on left breast-pocket.*
Do I not deserve an answer?" [*Rapid change to the confidential aside.*] How his rhapsodies entrance her!
[*With regret.*] But the pearly portals of her speech are barred by caramel.

VIII.

[*Sir P. with growing anxiety.*]
"Have I been but over-confident; and can I be distasteful
To the one whose guide and stay through life I thought to have become?
[*Desperately.*] Then in pity let me *know* it!" [*Pause; then sadly.*] But with too cohesive paste full
Is her dewy mouth; and so, perforce, fair Amabel is dumb!

IX.

"Is it *time* you need?" he falters, with humility pathetic,
"Never fear that I by sudden scare your judgment would compel!"
[*Business here.*] She makes efforts energetic to resolve the seal hermetic
Of involuntary silence—but 'tis set in caramel!

X.

[*Sir P. again, reproachfully.*]

"There *was* a time when graciously for me you my cigar lit,
And would linger near me while I smoked, and vow you *loved* the smell!
Were you but trifling with me then?—[*with pained conviction*]—or why that sudden scarlet?"
[*Aside.*] But she's flushing with *vexation* at her stubborn caramel.

XI.

[*With a grieved dignity.*]

"From your silence now I must infer you've acted insincerely,
Ah! your little feet a bleeding heart have trampled in the dust—
For I loved you [*broken accents*] very dearly; but at last I see, too clearly,
That I've centred all my hopes on one unworthy of my trust!

XII.

"Can you no word of answer deign—encouraging or chilling?
Triple fool is he who seeks to touch the heart of a coquette!
[*Bitterly.*
Since you're obviously unwilling, I" .... [*with reviving hope*] "but, stay—your eyes are filling!
Only whisper one shy syllable in sign you love me yet!"
[*With tender invitation.*

XIII.

[*Tragic Recitative.*]

And she's writhing in her anguish, with a dreary wonder whether
She is under the benumbing blight of some enchanter's spell;
For a link of honeyed leather locks her dainty lips together,
And the pent emotion cannot pass that gag of caramel!

XIV.

Then Sir Peveril, with an agony he vainly seeks to smother,
Says: "Your silence I interpret now! You are no longer free! [*Here nod your head with a dismal sagacity.*
But are plighted to Another, and regard me 'as a brother,'—
Which I can't pretend to care about—is there no hope for me?
[*Stoop forward, with hands extended, palms upward in supplication.*

XV.

[*After remaining in this attitude as long as you think proper, draw yourself up in haughty surprise.*

"Still this silence? Then I leave you. Though you care not to be *my* mate,
Though you do not hold me worth the boon of e'en a brief good bye,
Should the cannibals some time eat me in Afric's sultry climate,
I may earn a posthumous regard entombed within a pie!"

[*Bitter emphasis on "posthumous" of a man who despairs of ever being appreciated in life.*

XVI.

Thus he leaves her: down the corridor his heavy footstep echoes,
While his parting words are ringing in her singing ears a knell.
And 'tis hers to feel for evermore—her life its dismal wreck owes
To immoderate indulgence in the tempting caramel!

This is the legitimate and only really artistic finale. . . . . But if experience teaches you that your recitation of these stanzas throws too heavy a gloom upon your audience, or damps them beyond their powers of recuperation, you may substitute the following stanza for the one immediately above:—

XVI*a*.

Then the caramel relents at last!—You find the phrase fantastic?
But it melts (although from motives unintentionally kind),
And she manages to masticate the morsel so elastic,
As she murmurs: "Though I've been so dumb—need you have been so *blind?*"

[*Rainbow effect of smiles through tears. Bring in all your maidenly archness for the concluding line, and you may be asked to recite something else.*

THE WRECK OF THE STEAMSHIP "PUFFIN."

EXAMPLE No. 8.

STYLE: *The "Marine Emotional."*

NAUTICAL Recitations are always deservedly popular, and no young Reciter can consider his training complete until he has learnt to deliver a piece of this kind with a due eye to effect.

For reasons which have been explained earlier, the Com-

piler cannot consistently with his aims select an example which is already famous, and so he has done his best to construct one for himself upon the lines of a poem, perhaps the most stirring and celebrated of them all.

He has called it :

THE WRECK OF THE STEAMSHIP "PUFFIN."

I.

Tell you a story, children ? Well, gather around my knee,
And I'll see if I cannot thrill you (though you're torpid after your tea),
With a moving tale of a shipwreck ; and—should you refrain from sleep,
For the cake was a trifle heavy—I flatter myself you'll weep ! [*This with modest confidence.*

II.

You all know Kensington Gardens, and some of you, I'll be bound, [*Pleasantly conversational.*
Have stood by the level margin of the Pond that's entitled "Round" ;
'Tis a pleasant spot on a summer day, when the air is laden with balm, [*Here inhale with intense appreciation.*
And the snowy sails are reflected clear in a mirror of flawless calm !

III.

[*Now shut off all your sunlight, and pile up the shadows; try to awaken interest, awe, foreboding.*

Well, it isn't like that in the winter, [*very seriously here*] when the gardens are shut at four,

And a wind is lashing the water, and driving the ducks ashore. [*Dwell on your ducks.*

Ah! the Pond can be black and cruel then, with its waves running inches high,

And a peril lurks for the tautest yacht that pocket-money can buy!

IV.

Yet, [*hinted condemnation here*] in weather like this, with a howling blast and a sky of ominous gloom,

Did the good ship "Puffin" put out to sea, as if trying to tempt her doom!

[*Explanatory aside.*] She was a model steamer, on the latest approved design,

And her powerful 10-slug engines were driven by spirits of wine.

V.

And a smarter crew (they were sixpence each!) never shipped on a model bark,

While her Captain, "Nuremberg Noah," had once commanded an ark;

Like a fine old salt of the olden school, he had stuck to his wooden ship,

But lately, he'd been promoted—and this was his trial trip.

[*Tender sympathetic stress on "trial" and "trip," which are important words.*

VI.

Off went the "Puffin" when steam was up, with her crew and commander brave! [*Heartily.*

And her screw was whizzing behind her as she breasted the foaming wave;

Danger? each sixpenny seaman smiled at the notion of that!

[*Smile here with the vapid placidity of a sixpenny sailor.*

[*Cloud your brows suddenly.*] But the face of the skipper looked thoughtful from under his broad-brimmed hat.

VII.

Was he thinking then of his children three—of Japheth, and Ham, and Shem?

Or his elephants (both with a trunk unglued!), was he sad at the thought of them?

Or the door at the end of his own old ark—did it give him a passing pain

To reflect that its unreal knocker might never deceive him again?

[*You should deliver all these queries with intense feeling unadulterated by any vulgar curiosity.*

VIII.

[*Very solemn here.*] Nay, children, I cannot answer—he had passed inquiry beyond:

He was far away on the billowy waste of the wild and heaving Pond,

[*You should throw a wailing inflection into this last line.*

Battling hard with the angry crests of the waves, that were rolling in

And seeking to overwhelm and swamp his staggering vessel of tin!

IX.

[*For next stanza, change attitude and look off right, shading your eyes—as if you saw a vessel in difficulties out beyond the grand piano.*]

Suddenly, speed she slackened, and seemed of her task to tire . . .

Aye ! for the seas she had shipped of late had extinguished her engine fire !

And the park-keeper, watching her, shook his head and in manner unfeeling cried :

"'Twill be nothing short of a miracle now if she makes the opposite side !"

X.

Think of it, children—that tiny ship, tossed in the boiling froth,

Drifting about at the wild caprice of the elements' fitful wrath !

Her screw-propeller was useless now that the flickering flame was out,

And the invalids gazed from their snug bath-chairs, till they almost forgot the gout.

XI.

[*Wilder attitude ; voice raised to a moderate shriek.*

Help for the gallant vessel ! she is overborne by the blast !

[*Hold on desperately to a chair.*

She is shipping water by spoonfuls now, I tell you she's sinking fast !

"Hi !" cried one of her owners to a spaniel, liver and black,

"Good dog, into the water quick!"

[*Clap your hands encouragingly, then, in accents of the deepest disgust,*

. . . . But the park-keeper [*pause*] held it back!

XII.

Yes, spite of indignant pleadings from the eager excited crowd,
He quoted a pedant bye-law: "In the water no dogs allowed."
Then shame on the regulations that would hinder an honest dog
From plunging in to assist a ship that is rolling a helpless log! [*This with a noble scorn.*

XIII.

Stand by all! for she'll ride it out—though she's left to do it alone.
She was drifting in, she was close at hand—when [*Lugubriously*] down she went like a stone!
A few feet more and they had her safe—and now, it was all too late,
For the "Puffin" had foundered in sight of port, by a stroke of ironical Fate!

[*Shake your head with impressive mournfulness here, both audience and speaker should now remain silent for a few moments in the purest sympathy—then go on more cheerfully.*

XIV.

But the other owner was standing by, and, tossing her tangled locks,
Down she sat on the nearest seat—and took off her shoes and socks!

[*The words "shoes and socks" are capable of infinite pathos.*]

"One kiss, brother!" she murmured, "one clutch of your strong right hand—

And *I'll* paddle out to the 'Puffin,' and bring her in safe to land!"

[*A grand heroic burst, as you announce this splendid determination.*]

XV.

What can a bare-footed child do? More than the pampered cur,

With his chicken-fed carcase shrinking, afraid from the bank to stir!

More than a baffled spaniel—aye, and more than the pug-dog pet,

That wrinkles his ebony muzzle, and whines if his paws are wet!

[*Even a very ordinary elocutionist should work his audience up to the point of hissing here; pronounce the words "baffled spaniel" indulgently, but brand the "cur" and "pug-dog" with your most scathing contempt.*]

XVI.

"Come back!" the park-keeper shouted—but she merely answered, "I *won't!*"

And into the water she waded—though the invalids whimpered, "Don't!"

Ah! but the Pond struck chilly, and the mud at the bottom was thick;

[*At the word "Ah!" draw up one leg slightly.*

But in she paddled, and probed it with the point of a borrowed stick!

XVII.

"Don't let go of me, darling!" [*Colloquial—but true to nature.*] "Keep hold of my fingers tight,
And I'll have it out in a minute or two . . . I haven't got up to it quite:
A minute more, and the sunken ship we'll safe to the surface bring,
[*Here look upwards, your whole face softened and ennobled by devoted courage, then relax into a smile of rapture.*]
Yes, and the sixpenny sailors, too, that we lashed to the funnel with string!"

XVIII.

Up to the knees in the water, [*this with deep commiseration*] Ethel and brother Ralph
Groped, till they *found* the "Puffin" and her sailors, soppy —but *safe!*
[*Let the last two words ring out like trumpet-notes.*
All the dear little sailors! [*Check yourself, and assume a serious agitation*] . . . but—[*gulp.*] Children—I can't go on!
For poor old wooden-faced Noah was—*how* shall I tell you? [*a short choke*]—gone!

XIX.

[*With intense solemnity.*]

He must have fallen over, out of that heeling boat,
Away in the dim grey offing, to rise and to fall like a float,
Till the colour deserted his face and form, as it might at an infant's suck,

And he sank to his rest in his sailor's tomb—the maw of a hungry duck!

[*Here you allow your voice to die away in a reverent whisper, and then, after a slight pause, to let your audience perceive the moisture in your eyes, continue in a gentle voice.*

XX.

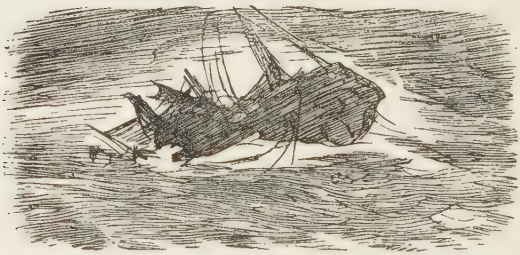
You are weeping? I cannot wonder. Mine *is* a pathetic style.

Weep for him, children, freely . . . [*Now with a gradual transition from tears to triumph.*] But, when you have finished, smile

With joy for his shipmates, rescued as though by a Prospero's wand,

And the "Puffin," snatched from the slimy depths of the Round but treacherous Pond!

[*Circular sweep of your right arm as you finish, and, unless we are much mistaken, you will find a popular audience respond in a way you will remember all your days.*



MICHAELMAS DAY.

EXAMPLE No. 9.

STYLE :—*The "Bucolic Buttonholing."*

ANOTHER essential part of every Drawing-room Reciter's education is the acquirement of the art of rendering a poem in dialect. There are several of these in existence already, but, true to his system, the Compiler ventures to offer one of his own manufacture. It is couched, as will be seen, in the well-known vernacular of Lcompshire, Loomsphire

being the county where nearly all the stage rustics come from.

The little piece is rich in local idioms and provincialisms, which a philologist will find worthy of careful study, especially as the author can guarantee the majority of them as being invented and constructed by himself.

It is not a bad plan to oil the jaw with a little vaseline before attacking this recitation, which has a good old-fashioned double title, viz. :—

MICHAELMAS DAY:

Or, HOW TAMMAS PATTLE VERY NEARLY COOKED HIS GOOSE.

[*You should give a brief summary of the situation, thus :— "This is supposed to be spoken by a Loompshire cottager to a stranger, who has remarked upon the goodly proportions of the goose in his front garden." Then start with as broad a drawl as you can assume, remembering always that, in dialect, to be unintelligible is to be effective.*

"Bewty," I 'ears ya carl her? aye, ya niver spoöke truthfuller wurrëd!

Rammack t' coontry side ovver, an' ya weänt see naw foiner burrëd!

Passon, he axed ma to sell her—but a' towld him, "Beänt o' naw use,—

She's as mooch of a Chris'en as moäst," I sez, "if she's nobbut a guse!" [*Touch of sarcasm here.*

Coom then! [*This coaxingly to a hypothetical bird—be careful not to make any invidious distinctions among your audience.*] Naäy, but she wunna—she's gotten a wull of her oän!

Looök at the heye of her,—pink an' greëy, loike fire in a hopal stoän.

Howsiver she seems sa hinnercent-loike, she's a follerin arl I saäy;

An' I boärt 'er at Kettleby Feär, I did, two yeär coom Cann'lemas Daäy.

Araminta her neäm is—but I carls her "Minty" fur shoärt;

She weänt naw moor nor a goslin', o' coorse, what toime she wur boärt.

But a' knawed she'd turn oot a rare 'un, to jedge by her weëight an feäl,

An' I reckoned to fat her by Michaelmas Eve, ef I boozled her oop wi' meäl.

Mayhappen ya'll 'ardly beleäve ma—but she unnerstood from the fust

What was hexpected of her—[*with a senile chuckle*] I thowt that burr'd 'ud ha bust!

Cram her, a' did! but she swuckered it doon wi niver a weästed drop—

Fur she tuk that hinterest in it as she'd ruther ha' choäked nor stop!

An' she'd foller wheeriver a' went—till I hedn't naw peäce fur t' foäk,

"'Ere be Tammas along of his sweetart!" wur hallus the village joäk:
But I'd saäy—"'Tes ma Michaelmas denner *I'm* squirin' aboot, owd chap!"
An' Minty she'd stan up a' tiptoe an' fluther her neck, an' flap!

Did I'appen to gaw of a hevenin' to looök at ma hinion patch,
Minty 'ud coom in along o' meä, an' rarstle aboot, an' scratch,
A' cocking her heye at the bed o' saäge, wi a kink, sa mooch as to saäy;
"Wull the saäge an' th' hinions be ready fur meä, by toime I be ready fur theëy?"

Or she'd snifter at arl the windfalls as ligged i' th' horchard graäs;
I knawed what she wur erfter, a' did—she wur pickin' 'em oot fur the saäss!
Till I'd roob ma 'ands fur to see her a' ploddlin' across the roärd,
[*With a tender pride.*] "Thee'll mak a denner, ma pratty," I'd saäy to her, "fit fur a loärd!"

Maäin an' boolky she wur as Michaelmas week coom nigh:
"Her 'll niver not bulge naw bigger," I thowt, "an' she art fur to die!"

I knaw'd she'd be doitlin somewheer on the pasture under t' mooör,
Sa I fetched t' chopper an' fettled 'im oop—[*grimly*] an' I went fur to do her!

Then I chillupped to Araminty, an' oop she rins wi' a clack;
"Seeä what I've gotten to show 'ee," I sez, (wi' the chopper behind ma back,)
But I looöked sa straänge an' callow, she knawed I wur meanin' 'er ill,
An' she kep a' sidlin' an' hedgin' awaäy, an' a gaäpin' wi' hopen bill!

Then I maäde a grab at 'er sooden—[*business here*]—but she skirtled off to a feäld,
Wheer Squire had been diggin fur fireclay, eh! but she yellocked an' beäled.
Cloppity-joggle I chaäsed her, sa well as I cud, bein' laäme,
An' flippity-flopper she kep on ahead an' a squawked out, "Shaäme!"

[*An amateur Reciter should find it easy here to suggest something of the peculiar intonation of a frightened goose. Interval; then continue apologetically.*

I wur haäf asheämed o' mysen' I wur, afoor I coom to the hend;
[*With remorse.*] "Ya owd ongreätful guzzard," I thowt, "to gaw killin' ya hoänly friend!"

But ma friend wur a Michaelmas denner as I hedn't naw 'art to refuse.

[*With more remorse.*] An' it maäde me seeä what a gowk I'd becän to ha' gotten sa thick with a guse!

Sa I danged her well as I slummocked on, as 'ard as ma legs 'ud stoomp:

"Waäit till I gets tha, ma laädy!" I sez—when arl on a sooden . . . . Boomp!

An' I wur a' sprawlin an' floppin in wan of the owd Squire's pits,

Wheer—but fur t' claäy at the bottom an' that—I mout ha' bin brokken to bits!

An' I roared fur 'elp—fur I cudn't git oot, an' th' watter wur oop to ma chin,

But nobbody 'eerd ma a' beälin', nor thowt on the 'ole I wur in!

An' a knawed as they'd niver foind nawthin' but boans—if they'd iver the goomption to dredge,

Then I groäned—[*Lower voice, impressively*] fur I eerd Araminty, a' tooklin oop at the edge!

[*With a grim sullenness.*] "Wunnerful funny, beänt it?" I sez, (I wur feälin fit for to choäk

To be catched loike a bee in a bottle—an' see her enjying the joäk!)

[*Indignant reproach.*] "Hevn't ye naw moor manners," I sez, "ya greät fat himperdent thing?"

[*Pathetically.*] Fur I'd bred her oop from a gosling, I had,—an' theer wur the sting!

Well, she left ma aloän at laäst, an' I hedn't a mossel o' hoäpe,
When—by coom Harry th' hedger, an' a hoicked ma oop with a roäpe ;
"Shudn't ha' heerd 'ee, Tammas," he sez, "or knawed as owt wur t' matter,
Ef it hedn't ha bin fur yon guse o' thine—but she coom an raäised sech a clatter,

"As drawed ma hon in spite o' mysen, till I moinded the hopen shaäft."
[*Let your voice grow tremulous with emotion here.*
Aye, Minty wur saävin' ma life oop theer—when I wur a' thinkin' she laäft !
[*Pause—after which resume impulsively,*
Then I rooshed fur to catch her to coodle, and gie her a greätful kiss . . .
[*Look round with a helpless expression of pained surprise.*
Eh ! but I raight down bloobered—fur she scatted awaäy wi' a hiss !

"Weänt niver 'urt 'ee ageän," sez I, "if thee'll hoänly forgit what's past ! "
She wur maäin and stiff fur a spell, she wur, but—[*with a smile of ineffable satisfaction*] I maäde her coom round at last !
An' I had ma Michaelmas denner the saäme, an' kivers fur two was laäid,
Theer was no wan but me an' Minty—an' a arty good denner we maäid !
[*Pause, then as if in answer to an inquiry.*

What did we maäke our meäl on ? [*with a shamefaced air.*]
Well, happen thee'll think ma a haäss—
But I'll tell 'ee ; [*deliberately*] I dined wi' Minty on th'
stooffin' an' happle saäss !

At the conclusion you should retire with as little parade as possible, and ask your way to the nearest surgeon's—as your jaw will probably require setting.

THE RECREANT RECLAIMED.

EXAMPLE No. 10.

STYLE :—*The "Teutonic-Imaginative."*

IT is one of the most pleasing characteristics of the

average Amateur Elocutionist that—although he may have but a shadowy acquaintance with all other languages than his own—he never suffers that circumstance to deter him from impersonating a foreigner of any given nationality at a moment's notice. So that no apology need be made for the following recitation, in which the most backward pupil will be sure to feel himself at home—and in that respect provoke the undisguised envy of his audience.

The poem is somewhat long, perhaps, but you only require two qualifications to prevent it from becoming insufferably tedious—a guttural accent, and a touch of genius. The former you can assume at will, and you would not be a young Reciter at all were you not proudly conscious of possessing the latter already. The title is:

THE RECREANT RECLAIMED.

[*Which you will of course pronounce as "Ze Reggreant Reglaimed."*]

I deach my dong in Engelandt zis dventy year and more,
And vonce I dvell at Vigmore Shtreet, ubon ze zegond vloor;
Bot zat has nodings hier to zay, zo blease—if you'll addend,
[*Dictatorially.*
I'll dell you of zom gurious dings vat habbened—mit a vriend.

He vas a hanzom-headed man (zo like me as a bea),
And eferyvere I valk apout he gom along mit me;

Bot all ze efening, beaceful-quiet, he shtay indoors and
shmoke,
And ven he vant to pe amused—he make himzelf a yoke !

Bot yokes did not gontent him long, he treamed, instead, of
lôf ;
And bassed ze dime ,vith gissing at a leedle vemale glôf ;
He dink ubon two shpargling eyes, von deligate gock-nose—
Dill zoon his dinkings vork him op mit gourage to
brobose !

Zen, ach ! she dilt her nose yet more, and gruel vorts she
shpoke :
" I vill not dwine aroundt no heart vat shmells zo shtrong
mit schmoke !
Vor you yourself it might not pe imbossible to gare—
Bot mit no ogly bipe vill I my Mann's avection share ! "
[*Here you should glance at your audience with a slightly hurt
expression.*

I dink I hear zom laty make a symbathetic shniff ?
You Englisch schendlevomens dreat a schmoker moch too
shtiff !
Ya zo ! meinzelf, I schmoke a bipe mit baintings on ze
bowl,
I use for him your sheep-tabak vat's dwisted in a roll.

It is a goot and bure tabak—zey *gannot* make it veak.
Shtill, ven I schmoke inside a drain—I vinds ze laties seeck !
[*You should mention this instance of insular intolerance with
a mild surprise.*

Bot zere, you makes me chadderbox, and dake op all ze dime!
I vant to dell you how mein vriend behafe himzelf sooblime.

"If you vill pe mein Braut," he zaid, "tobaggo I'll renounce!
I schvear I'll nefer puy no more von zolidary ounce!"
And she gif him out her lily handt, and shmile at him zo shveet;
"Py sodge a sagrifice," she zay, "you brove your lôf indeet!"

"I vill dake you, on your solemn vort mit schmoking to get rid,
Pe off and purn your bipes and dings!" vich—boor yong man—he did!
Dree sblendid bipes he sacrificed, in china, glay, and vood;
And vatched zem craggle in ze vlames—I vonder how he *could!*

Vile mit zem vent his brime cigars of pest Havaña prandt,
Imborted shtraight vrom Hampurg—in his own dear Vaderlandt! [*Sentimentally.*
Henzefort he lif a schmokeless life vor vear to lose his bride,
And nefer vonce gomblaimed to her of sofferings inzide!

Bot, unter all his egstasies and rabdures ven zey met,
Zomdimes he vish she vouldn't mind — von leedle zigarette! . . . [*Pause.*

He sat alone ze night pefore his vedding vas to pe,
And dried do galm his jomping zoul mit bondering and tea—

Ven zoddenly—he hear a zound, as if zom barty knock,
Vich gom vrom his tobaggo-jar, long embdied of its shtock:
"Gom in! I mean gom *out!*" he cried (he vas a viddy chap!)
For none of your nocdurnal knocks I do not gare von rap!"
[*Here you should be convulsed with inward laughter.*

But, at his yoke, ze lid fly off—and sblash into his cop!
[*Start and stare.*
And a kind of leedle voman's form inzide ze jar sbring op;
Her face was yust ze golour of a meerschaum nod quide new,
And her hair vas all in ribbling vaves—like long-cut honnydew! [*Bring out the poetry of this description.*

In gold and silber she vas roped, all shpangled o'er mit shtars,
As if she hat her gostume made mit bapers round zigars,
And like an eel his bagbone squirmed—his hair stood all erect—
(For beoples in tobaggo-jars is dings you don't exbect).

"Bervidious von!" she shpeak at him, zo broud as any queen,
"Pehold your homage-objects vonce—ze Goddess Nigodeen!
I galls to ask ze reason vy you leafs my aldars cold,
And nefer purns me incense, vich your bractice vas of old?"

"To bay you more respects, I must," he plurted out,
"degline—
I'm vorshibing at bresent at an obbosition shrine!"
"And vill you make yourself," she gries, "a dankless
renegade
To von who, oftendimes invoked, shtill nefer vailed her
aid.

"To charm avay your lonely dimes, and soffogate your
gare?
If zat's your leedle game, mein vriend, dake my advice—
bevare!"
"I'd gladly zeat my zoul ubon your himmel-dinted gloud,
Bot, as a Penedick," he said, "I vill not pe allowed.

"I do gonfess" (I haf exblained he vas a vonny vellow!)
"Mitout a bipe, mein honnymoon vill not daste quide zo
mellow!"
"Enoff!" she zaid, "you vatch your eye—and zee vat vill
bekom!"
She bopped inzide—and left ze jar so embdy as a drom!

He sit and vipe his sbegdacles, and shtare, and rob his
head
At vinding it zo vanciful—and zoon he vent to ped.

* * * * *

Vell, next day, on ze afdernoon his honnymoon pegan—
And Dandalus vas nodings to zat boor dormented man!

For ven he dry to giss his vife ubon her lips zo ripe,
Petween his own brojected out von pig soobyectif bipe !

Yes, efer more, in sbite of all ze dender vorts he'd zay,
Ze sbegtral vigure of a bipe kept gedding in ze vay ;
Ondill ubon ze burple sky shone fort ze efening shtar—
Vereon ze bipe dransformed himzelf, and change to a zigar !

And, vorst of all, his vife exbressed no bity for his fate ;
She galled it all a hombogsdrick—and zo zey sebarate.
Zen benidently he redurned and gried to Nigodeen :
" Forgif—and nefer more I'll pe ze vool I vonce haf peen !

" I lôfed my vife—bot all ze dime I gared for you ze most,
I'm dired of schmoking dings vat is no pedder as a ghost ! "
Zo Nigodeen she dakes him pack, begause his vife vas gone—
[*With a touch of slyness.*] And now ze bipe he schmokes is *nod* an immaterial von.

* * * * *

You toubt my vort ? you dink I lie ? Brebare yourzelves to jomp—
I vas zat yong boor man meinzelf—der Herr Brofessor Bomp !

A FOREGONE VENGEANCE!

EXAMPLE No. 11.

STYLE: *The "Triumphant-Tragic."*

SOME have remarked that the young Reciter is seldom happy in his delivery of blank verse. To which others have replied that he does not deserve to be. But the persevering Student may be advised to ignore these unmannerly and ill-natured gibes, and to give his most

careful attention to the intensely dramatic soliloquy he will find under this heading, after which no blank verse will ever present difficulty to him again.

We call it :

A FOREGONE VENGEANCE!

[*To render this recitation completely effective, it is essential that you should provide yourself with an ordinary Windsor chair, and a long print peignoir, or wrapper. Place your chair well to the right, and then come on from the O. P.* (*that is, the same side*) *crouching and looking off left with an air of tigerish anticipation. Now begin.*]

'Tis he ! Can I mistake the clustered curls
Upon that hated hyacinthine head ?
Did they not wile from me the fickle heart
Of perjured Bandolina ? [*In a hissing voice.*
[*Affect to be cautiously observing.*] . . . There he stands :
Before my window, where yon winsome form,
Rotating slow in measured self-display,
Attracts his errant eye . . .
[*Here extend arms in passionate invocation.*] Now, demi-siren,
Look languor at him from pellucid orbs,
Wreathe waxen arms, and lure him in—to Me !
So, once again ! . . . he wavers . . . he is mine !
[*Savage exultation, which is usually performed with the eyebrows.*]
Let me be calm. [*Self-restraint, indicated by violent heaving of shirt-front.*] Good morning, Sir, t you.

I pray you [*with a forced and ghastly smile*] step within, and seat yourself—

I will attend erelong. [*Hold open imaginary door, and close it stealthily before you resume.*] My bird is trapped—

And knows me not! [*With dark suspicion, which you can easily convey by half closing your eyes, and pressing the knuckle of your bent forefinger against lower lip.*] Unless I be deceived,

No hazard freak of hooded Fortune's urn,

[*A nasty line for the "h"-less.*

But Bandolina's dainty insolence

Dispatched him hither. Ha! the victim calls;

I come anon, Sir! [*Fawningly, and accompanied by a glance of withering hate levelled full at your unconscious chair.*]

Patience, peevish worm,

Why thus anticipate the time to writhe?

[*This in a fierce aside.*

[*Now draw the chair forward with an exaggerated deference, under which should lurk a subdued ferocity. Speak the following lines smoothly and trippingly, accompanying them with such by-play as may suggest itself to you.*

I crave your pardon for my tardiness;

Suffer me to dispose these lendings—thus.

[*Here take the wrapper, and shake it out.*

This band above the elbows—tighter—so.

Nay, Sir, I do protest this is no gag!

[*Spread your hands here.*

'Tis but a poor contrivance of mine own

To shield the mouth against encroaching suds.

Refreshing, Sir, indeed, this change of weather,

And seasonable for the time of year.
The birds, I understand, are passing shy.
You are a sportsman, so I take it, Sir?
And, though I may not boast myself a Nimrod,
I am no stranger to the keen delight
Of one who views some flutterer in his snare.

[*A double meaning to this.*

But one more knot—and now . . . [*Here you stride to a position in front of the chair, which you survey with folded arms, and the smile of a mocking fiend.* My feigning's done!
Writhe as you will, I have you at my mercy.
Baldwin McAssir, we have met at last! [*In a terrible voice.*
You know me not? Regard me,—[*strike a good firm attitude here.*] I am He
Bereft by you of Bandolina's love!
Aha! I see you quail at last—at last!

[*Nod violently several times.*

Yet fear not I should stoop to seek your life—
My vengeance shall be sated on your hair.
By that alone have you supplanted me,
And that I doom to perish past recall!

[*Here you point towards the ceiling with cold sinister determination.*

Cast up your eyes to yonder whirling wheel:
Then—mark this brush; 'tis set with bristling wires,
And frivollers term it my "Cheveux de Frizz,"—
No matter, these revolving teeth shall rake
The curls that Bandolina oft caressed—
But shall again—no more! You like the prospect?
Then, hear me further: I have fluids here,
Elixirs for evolving latent hair.

With others christened (in some franker mood)
"Depilatory Agents"—scarce less potent,
Upon your helpless head I'll pour them *all!*
[*Arm raised in wild menace.*
Nay, though you smile defiance through your gag,
I swear to lay that haughty crest so low
That never may it soar in pride again!
A truce to words—to action! . . . . Still that smile,
So bitter, yet so calm—it maddens me!
I'll stay my hand no longer . . . . [*Violent plunge with right arm—after which you recoil from the chair with a stagger, gazing aghast at some object you are supposed to be holding in your outstretched hand.*] Juggling fiend!
Was *this* the secret of your dauntless port,
And could my practised eye be so deceived?
Oh, this is gall and bitterness indeed!
[*Here you cover your eyes for a moment, and then return to the chair with a resignation full of gloomy dignity.*
Yet, seeing I am thus forestalled by Fate,
I do renounce my purpose—since I must.
[*With bitter scorn.*] Take back your wig, McAssir, go in peace!
Nay more, in token that my heart is changed,
I'll coax it into comeliness anew. [*Business here.*
Permit me to unbind you; you are free,
And owe me but a trifle—eighteenpence;
Pay at the counter as you pass, I beg;
[*Gesture of haughty refusal.*
There are no toilet requisites you need?
[*With chilling courtesy.*
Farewell, then—you have nothing more to fear.

[*Here you watch your rival's exit with a fixed scowl.*

Thus ends my vengeance, as an idle dream,
Yet, no, 'tis but deferred with interest.

[*You conclude with a biting apostrophe to your intended victim.*

Back to your Bandolina, plumaged daw!
Be bald, but resolute in your deceit,
And let her learn upon her honeymoon
How you have drawn—without a single hair.
Then I shall be avenged! ha-ha! avenged!

[*Stalk off moodily—and let somebody else remove the chair.*

À PROPOS DE BOTTES.

EXAMPLE No. 12.

STYLE: *The "Voluptuously Melancholic."*

THE Compiler will make no apology for the present example, although he does not deny that it offers greater difficulties than any of its predecessors. This is a progressive series, and it may be safely assumed that a pupil who has diligently and faithfully mastered the previous exercises is well qualified to delineate the very subtlest forms of emotion. He should look upon these recitations as so many jingling fetters, designed to further, whilst they appear to restrain, his elocutionary ability, to the gradual increase of which he must expect to

find the burden delicately accommodated. Here the note throughout is a vague and sensuous melancholy, dominated by the impending and slowly advancing shadow of disaster, with a suggestion, as the piece proceeds, of mysticism and dread fatality.

To convey all this, in evening dress and in an ordinary drawing-room, would be well-nigh impossible without previous study; but, thanks to the monitions of our manual and to your own industry, you should now be able to recite this piece, as the police-court phrase is, "on your head,"—though a less unconventional attitude is recommended. In opening, allow yourself to drift dreamily into position, with your head inclined slightly towards the left; let your prevailing tone be melodious, even to excess—a low cooing delivery will be very effective in places. Take every stanza very slowly. The title, which you may announce with a sad smile, is

À PROPOS DE BOTTES.

In a bow-window on the Esplanade,
Belinda with her Bertram breakfasted;
But, while with outward calm his tea she made,
Within was all uncertainty and dread.
What though the toast was crisp, the eggs new laid?
When, in its envelope of sullen red,
The missive that constrained her heart to flutter
Lay—still unopened—by the bread and butter!

[*This will arouse your audience's interest; allow time for this, then proceed with deeper intensity.*

Fleet is pursuing Fate—when most she limps!
So Bertram, having put away his ham,
Upon his letters cast a careless glimpse,
Selecting first the ruthless telegram,
That tore him from felicity and shrimps:
He muttered words that sounded like "My lamb!"
The while he in despair the carpet stamped on,
"My own," he cried, "I must leave Littlehampton!"

[*This with a couple of tragic nods.*

[*Now turn your head slowly round to right and back again, in a gaze of petrified despair; to get this effect, concentrate your thoughts on some perfectly common-place subject, such as boiled rice; press your hands to side, as if in pain.*

Her face she turned, all piteously drawn,
And gazed upon him apprehensively,
With eyes dilated, like some startled fawn;
One crystal tear fell flashing in her tea,
Nor heeded she the appetising prawn,
Nor amber marmalade from far Dundee.

[*Leave off thinking of boiled rice here.*

"Bertram!" she gasped, "leave me not thus—in pity!
They cannot *really* want you in the City!"

[*Throw acute despair into this. You might clasp your hands in frantic entreaty, if they are not liable to become red under the influence of emotion—a tendency calculated, for some reason, to check sympathy.*

But he: "Alack, that I must answer 'Yes'!
Who could foretell the dream would end so soon,

Or that the envious rack of busi-ness
Would drift athwart our radiant honeymoon ?—
Yet I must catch the ten o'clock express,
Which gets me up to London Bridge by noon !
Nay, sweetest one, give not the reins to sorrow—
I shall be back ere dinner-time to-morrow ! "

[*This with a fictitious cheerfulness.*

This hearing, she forbore to make a fuss,
And sought by packing her despair to drug ;
Then, seated in the Hotel omnibus,
With dainty hands she strapped his railway rug—
Till, at the Littlehampton terminus,
They parted—with one last hysteric hug :
And he, in masculine emotion choking,
Entered a first-class carriage labelled " Smoking."

[*Now cast down your eyes, and resume in tone of chastened melancholy.*

Now, feeling that her well of joy is dried,
Her lotus-tree down-withered to the roots,
Back to her lonely lodgings she has hied,
Where a sweet pang through all her being shoots,—
For, basking on the hearth-rug, side by side,

[*Here you bend slowly forward, with outstretched arms and a smile of ineffable tenderness.*

She finds—her best-belovèd Bertram's Boots !
His patent leathers he had gone to town in,
This was the pair he must have travelled down in !

[*With an awestruck delight.*

[*Speak the next stanza very gently and feelingly.*

There is a pathos in the mute appeal
Of objects that have shared a bygone bliss :
And even these dumb boots are down at heel,
Seeming their absent master now to miss !
Which, as Belinda notes, she fain must kneel,
And cheer them with a sympathetic kiss.
But soon a carmine tide o'erflows her neck fast—
The maid arrives, to clear away the breakfast !

[*Very tender stress on breakfast; the breakfast* he *had shared with her—the meal begun in happy unconsciousness of coming bereavement—there is a point to be made here.*

Anon a fantasy Belinda thrills,
And both the boots she on the table sets ;
All lovingly each vacancy she fills
With freshly-gathered sweet March violets,

[*Remember that "violets" is a tri-syllable to the poetic ear.*

And heavy-headed saffron daffodils—
(Nor necessary moisture she forgets.)
"To sigh," she whispers, "for your native valley cease—
For when were flowers honoured by such chalices ?"

[*This is wifely, but somewhat overstrained in sentiment—tone it down.*

And she forgets the grim Teutonic bands,
And she forgets the donkeys on the green,
And she forgets the seagull-haunted sands,
And she forgets the fashions in "The Queen,"
Seated before those boots with claspèd hands,

She feels no yearning e'er to change the scene.
Content to linger by her flowers fragrant,
And steep herself in recollections vagrant.
[*Hands behind you for these lines—speak with eyes half shut, and a dreamy melodious murmur.*

Thus all day long she keeps them in her sight,
And murmurs to them tender little phrases,
Imagining they comprehend her quite—
Conduct that her good landlord much amazes,
Who overhears her bidding them "good-night,"
[*Kiss your fingers and smile fondly here.*
And open-mouthed upon the threshold gazes,
[*Both hands raised.*
Holding perchance that such proceedings can well
Entitle her to residence at Hanwell!

Belinda seeks her couch—but, ere she sinks
Into the short oblivion of sleep,
Her dewy eyes shine brighter, as she thinks,
How those stout boots will o'er her slumbers keep
A ward as unremitting as the lynx!
Then trembles—for, amid that silence deep,
She hears: (O portent passing understanding!)
She hears them creaking towards the second landing!
[*Charge this last couplet with a weird and sinister suggestiveness—after which you may proceed more placidly.*

Uneasy on the morrow she descends—
To find her flowers scattered far and faded,
And the boots—*gone!* Her perfect head she bends,

The fair low brow with sweet distress is shaded,
Marvelling much what evil this portends :
Can Bertram, too, have perished just when *they* did ?
And were his boots, as Death secured his last trophy,
Tramping upstairs to break the dread catastrophe ?
[*This with parted lips, restless eyes, and a tone of hushed concentrated awe.*

When may she learn whither those twain have fled,
Having achieved that automatic climb ?
And where her Bertram now is lying—*dead*,
The victim of some secret midnight crime ?
She can but hide her grief-distracted head,
And wait the leaden-footed lounge of Time !
About the Supernatural no man knew all,
As she has learned from many a Christmas annual.

She cowers to receive the stroke of Fate,
[*Suggest action of cowering.*
Hearing on every breeze her Bertram's knell.
[*Stop ears with fingers.*
Hark ! (*start, and point off in wild alarm.*)
. . . . was there not a clanging of the gate ?
A feverish ringing at the front-door bell ?
[*Let your face clear gradually from terrified anticipation to incredulous relief—this will be found capital emotional practice.*
'Tis Bertram's self ! nay, wondrous to relate,
He seems most unromantically well !
Finding his Club a dismal place to stay at, he

Has spent, it seems, his evening at the Gaiety.
But ah! not yet Belinda's mind at ease is!
(Specks there will be upon the fairest fruits)
She must be silent—Bertram such a tease is—
But it appears that those were *not his boots!*
And every time she hears the landlord's sneezes,
She blushes to recall her past pursuits,
Keen self-reproach recurs at each cadenza—
Wet feet, she fears, brought on *that* influenza!

[*Close with a gentle sigh and compassionate shake of the head, as you bow yourself gracefully off. If you are called on again*—don't go!

THE BACHELOR.

EXAMPLE No. 13.*

STYLE : *The "Spasmodic Soul-felt."*

THIS is yet another instance of a piece which the superficial Student will feel inclined to despise for its extreme simplicity. The short couplets will be sure to strike him as altogether too commonplace and monotonous to afford sufficient scope for the infinite variety of his powers. But a Reciter with a dash of the Heaven-born Artist in his composition will know better; he will see instinctively the immense and electrical effects that can be got out of almost every stanza;

* This poem originally appeared in *Longman's Magazine*, and is now by permission of Messrs. Longman & Co., included in *Mr. Punch's* collection for the first time.

he will recognise that here he has a piece capable of rendering a drawing-room audience more uncomfortable than any five ordinary recitations could do. However, as Reciters of this type are almost necessarily rare, we shall not depart from our usual method of interpolating hints and suggestions.

The great point at starting is to strike the right key-note, and it is as well to do this at once by the tone and manner in which you announce your title :—

THE BACHELOR.

[*Don't do it too jauntily, or your audience will instantly imagine it is going to be a* FUNNY *piece, and permit themselves an anticipatory titter, knowing by experience that there are many excellent jests current on such a topic. And after that, your most pathetic efforts are as likely as not to go with roars—more likely than not. Announce it with a note of deprecation, a suggestion that you are fully aware that bachelors as a class are fit objects for ridicule, but that this particular bachelor is an exception.*]

PART THE FIRST.

Beside his fire the Bachelor sat ;
A friendless man—in a furnished flat.

[*Insist lightly on the furniture, so as to emphasise the friendlessness—if the point is not too subtle for you, or the audience.*

The light of youth from his eyes had fled.
The hair was thin on the top of his head.

[*If the majority of your male hearers are similarly affected, they are likely to express great amusement here. So you should be careful to check such levity in advance by the excessive solemnity of your manner.*

Angular, cynical, bilious, grim—(*with a rising inflection—then in hollow despair*)
Was there one in the world to care for *him?*

Thus he mused—as often he'd mused before;
When—he heard the hammer on his front-door!

[*Point to be made here; this occurrence—not unusual elsewhere—is almost unprecedented in the Bachelor's experience.*

And he rose, impelled by repeated knocks,
To find on his threshold—a boy—with a box!

A plain deal box of a medium size,
Which the Bachelor took in blank surprise.

[*There is a good deal to be got out of the "plain deal box;" it is almost as effective in its way as the "small tin cup" of Miss Maud Muller, from which most young Reciters derive so much refreshment.*

He had made no purchase of late; then swift,
[*severely logical here.*
The inference followed—it must be a gift

From some former friend he had long forgot!
[*Yearning, then more practical.*
So he searched for his scissors to sever the knot.

And in eager haste he lifted the lid,
All unsuspicious of what it hid :
[*Pause here, to communicate some of this curiosity to your audience, who ought to be dying to know what was in the box—though they will probably disguise their impatience.*

Then—his fury broke in a frantic curse,
Too vigorous to repeat in verse !
[*With a shocked suggestion of the most awful profanity.*

What unknown hand had dealt this stroke ?
What fiend conceived so cruel a joke,

As to send—(*another pause, so as to keep your secret as long as you can*)—Ah, smile at it those who can !
A dainty doll—to a childless man ? [*Unless you are very careful, some of the audience will infallibly giggle here.*

He flung it from him ! it fell on a chair—
And smiled through its fleece of golden hair

Straight up in his face—till he gave a start,
As a sudden compunction pierced his heart,

For the eyes, and the amber tresses above
Resembled those of his Early Love !
[*In a tone of dreamy wonder—then reminiscently.*

Whose eyes were as round and devoid of guile ;
Who had just that placid persistent smile,

Ere her mother's monitions she obeyed—
And married a man in the timber trade!

So—he softly patted her waxen hand,
[*Suit action to word here.*
And she seemed in some way to understand

When he raised her gently, for—wondrous thing!—
As though his fingers had found a spring

That set in motion some secret gear,
She *spoke*—in silver-toned accents clear! . . .

[*The passage which follows is, so to speak, the "cheval de bataille" of this recitation. If it is difficult—and isn't it?—for a Male Reciter to adequately convey the nursery prattle of an infant, how much more so to indicate the faltering accents of a phonographic doll! Take it very slowly; rid your countenance of all expression; make your intonation metallic, with a touch of woolliness—and the compiler wishes you well over it. Now—*

"I'se 'oor dolly—'oo must be
Always velly tind to me,
Yike me best of all 'oor toys,
Hide me thafe from naughty boys;
Never yeave me near ze fiah,
In ze wain, or in ze miah.
And I'll 'peak when 'poken to,
'Oo yove me—an' I'll yove 'oo!"

It thrilled his pulse to a faster throb;
He sought to swallow a rising sob.

For his flinty bosom he could not steel
'Gainst the innocent guile of the doll's appeal !

And his furrowed face grew strangely mild
As he nursed the doll—like a little child !

All through the night she softly slept
In the drawer where his clean shirts were kept ;

But the Bachelor's eyelids closed in vain—
For there rang in his ears that naïve refrain !
[*Pause here ; then with a fierce scorn of irreverent ridicule.*

Ah, well, it came from a phonograph,
Yet I pity those who would merely laugh.
[*This will shut up any sniggerer.*

And malice itself might feel some shame
To see how its shaft had missed its aim !

* * * * *

[*Pause again—but not too long, or you may lose your audience. Catch them in the act of rising, and compel them to resume their seats by the announcement of—*]

PART THE SECOND.

(*Apologetically, as if it was the Author's fault—not yours.*)
All through the next succeeding day,
From the time his breakfast was cleared away,

Till after he had taken tea,
He nursed the doll on his elderly knee.

He was holding it still upon his lap,
When—once again, he heard a rap !
[*Impressive silence.*

And, thrusting the doll with a guilty air
Between the cushions that lined his chair,
[*Rapid and dramatic delivery for this.*

He sat up, stiffer than just before,
Grimly eyeing his opening door. [*Nod here twice.*

Then he felt his brains in confusion whirl,
For his visitor was—a little girl !

A small patrician in plush and fur,
With hardly a trace of the *child* in her.
[*Remember to make this infant as unsympathetic as possible.*

And he caught his breath in a gasping choke ;
He had guessed her errand—or ever she spoke !

She sat down preening her parasol ;
Then "I've come to ask if you've seen my doll.'
[*All this in a thin cold voice, but* NOT *falsetto.*

"I ordered it yesterday afternoon,
And they promised me they would send it *soon*.

"But they never *did*—and such silly mistakes
A shopkeeper person so often makes,

"(There's a perfect *idiot* who keeps that shop!)
That—though we're at the bottom, and you at the top—

"I thought I'd step up and inquire," she said,
"If they'd happened to send it to *you* instead.

"So boring losing one's doll, you know!"
And he answered, "I—should imagine so!"
[*Put plenty of repressed feeling into this.*

Though he wreathed his face in a ghastly grin,
A bitter struggle went on within!
[*Indicate this by facial contortions.*

This child came armed with the legal claim,
But, oh! it was cruel, all the same!
[*With a cry of bitter protest.*

For how could he now, without disgrace,
Produce that doll from her hiding-place?

Then, gripping his chair in convulsive clutch;—
"Do you love," he faltered, "your doll so much?"
[*Intense anxiety here—expressed with eyebrows.*

"Well, I liked her—rather," she drawled, "before,
But I've thought of something I'd like still more.

"So, as soon as I get her, I mean to arrange
With the man at the shop to let me exchange."

Then—he *might* regain her! [*dramatic pause; indicate by pantomime the workings of his mind—hope, doubt, despair. You can indicate anything by pantomime, as the success of 'L'Enfant Prodigue' has doubtless already convinced you*] No—he was shy,
A doll was a thing that he *dared* not buy!

And still, as the child went chattering on,
He suppressed—what he was sitting upon!

Dolls, she declared, were going out,
[*Here you will mince affectedly.*
One scarcely ever saw any about!

And though hers was one of the very few
That could make a speech—which was something new,

That speech in time would be apt to pall!
And the Bachelor basely agreed with it all!
[*With concern at such moral cowardice, and the disloyalty implied therein.*

Though his soul was seething in revolt,
Like a cistern struck by a thunderbolt!
[*This is a fine image—make the most of it.*

What—yield his idol and all her charms
To alien unsympathetic arms?

Give her up for ever ? Not so, not so !
He could not—he *would* not—let her go !
[*Desperately ; then return to narrative tone.*

"Then—you *haven't* seen her ?" she asked (Ah, why
Is it always so easy to tell a lie

Upon any sudden emergency ?
[*Here pull yourself together as if for a thumper.*
"I am sorry to say . . . I have—*not !*" said he.

And he bowed her out with a courtly air—
[*Illustrate this as well as you can.*
Then sank with a sigh in his easy chair.

What recked he, now that the deed was done,
If fairly or foully the prize were won !
[*In a tone of reckless triumph.*

Soon under the cushion he eagerly sought
The hidden treasure so dearly bought.

She was dis-interred—and his hot tears gushed . . .
For her small soft nose was entirely crushed !

And remorseful grief he in vain indulged,
As he noticed one of her eyes had bulged !

Then next, with his nerves unstrung, he tried
The spring of the cylinder inside . . .
[*Pause again ; moment of agonised suspense.*

She spoke—[*relief at first—then terror*] Ah, horror!
the sounds he heard
Were now discordant, and harsh, and blurred,

And, beneath the jumble of words and jerks,
The click and stammer of damaged works,

His ear detected—unless he dreamt—
An undercurrent of keen contempt!

[*This next piece is perhaps the worse "crux" of the two. You have to render a disorganised version of the original speech, as perverted by its hearer's sense of his irreparable wrong,—an extremely complicated impression to convey. A guttural click at intervals will go a long way towards attaining your object, but requires rigorous practice.*

"Yeave me! Thafer I must be!
'Oo's so—click!—un-tind to me!
Tick-tack . . . ' oo have boke 'oor toy
Yike a—gurr-gurr—naughty boy!
Hide from me, 'oo dwedful liah!
An—an—i—as and Zafiah!
Never more I'll 'peak—it's too!—
Dolly—dud—dud—don't yove 'oo!"

[*Now continue in a solemn awestruck tone.*
She ceased—and he knew he had sinned in *vain*—
He could never endure that speech again!

Nor meet unmoved the stern blue eye
That stared reproachfully all awry!

For the broken accent that clicked and jerked
Was the voice of Conscience he would have burked!

Then, pale and panting, he poked the fire . . . .
And—placed her upon the funeral pyre,

Hiding his haggard eyes,—for he felt
He should go stark mad if he saw her melt!

[*Here you should rumple your hair and gaze about you wildly, before speaking the final couplet, in your hollowest accents.*

And he staggered forth with a stifled groan,
Once more—for *ever*—unloved, *alone!*

[*After which we should advise you to stagger forth too, as abruptly as possible, and—on grounds of expediency quite as much as for artistic reasons—not to disturb the impression you have made by re-appearing for applause.*

POSITIVELY THE LAST PERFORMANCE!

EXAMPLE No. 14.

STYLE : *The "Homely Pathetic."*

"PATHOS," as was once profoundly observed to the present writer, "is a ticklish thing;" and it must be admitted that the pathos of some Amateur Reciters is infinitely more ticklish than their humour. It is, however (as has been already remarked in connection with curdling), the natural and perfectly legitimate ambition of the youthful Elocutionist to harrow his audience to the best of his ability. And audiences are not at all averse to being harrowed — they may

even be said to like it! It is a curious phenomenon; but, when persons are assembled for social enjoyment, nothing apparently affords them keener delight than a performance which produces in them certain peculiar sensations: such as the feeling of partial lack of control over the facial nerves, smarting and pricking at the back of the eyes, a growing sense of strangulation, and a general conviction that, unless something occurs to make them laugh at *once*, they will be irresistibly compelled to sob like so many seals. These agreeable results may be attained with a really surprisingly small expenditure of pathos; and it has sometimes occurred to the Compiler that the means adopted to secure them often depend more than should be upon sentiment which might almost be described as false or overstrained; that the incidents dealt with have but little relation to real life; and that what might have proved eminently touching, is marred at the critical point by some undesigned and quite involuntary association with the ludicrous or the grotesque.

Now, in the following piece, the pitfalls above alluded to have been avoided with sedulous care. In it there is nothing overcoloured or unnatural—at least, such is the humble opinion of its author. The professional ardour and enthusiasm for art of the common performing canary must be facts within the knowledge of all observant persons, and —though it may not be invariably the case that the ruling passion should declare itself to the very last—only the very rashest of sceptics will venture to declare such a thing impossible. Not that it would really matter if it were—because, so long as you pitch your pathos strong enough, you need not trouble yourself about the probability or even the possibility of the initial idea. It is only the morbid

conscientiousness with which it has been already mentioned that the author is afflicted, which impels him to stick to actual life, and, like Caleb Plummer, "to go as close to Nature as he can, for sixpence."

The Reciter will find that he produces a favourable impression, and instantly arouses the good-humour of his hearers by announcing this piece as—

POSITIVELY THE LAST PERFORMANCE!

[*As you come on, there should be a general suggestion in your manner, that you are supposed to be the impresario of an itinerant Cat and Canary Troupe. Begin with a slow and somewhat depressed shake of the head, as if in answer to a casual inquirer, who is, of course, our old friend, the Imaginary Second Person.*

No, we ain't performin' to day, sir—and the public's all on the gape
At seein' the mice in mournin, and the cats in chokers o' crape ;
But I'm givin' the Show a rest, d'ye see ? for I didn't feel up to the job,
[*Pause ; then with suppressed emotion.*
For my leadin' comejian's left me, sir—[*Here you perceive that you are not fully understood, and explain with a touch of impatience*]—the brindle Kinairy—Bob !

What, ye don't remember ? [*Surprise.*] Not him as wore the toonic o' Turkey red ?

What rode in the gilded kerridge, with a 'at an' plumes on his 'ed ?
And, as soon as we'd taken a tanner, 'ud fire a saloot from the gun ?
[*With a lachrymose enthusiasm.*
There was Talent inside o' that bird, there was—or *I* never see it in one !
[*Here you moralise in a philosophic and slightly cynical vein.*

Well, he's soon forgot—but I've often thought as a *fish* keeps longer than Fame !
[*Break off with a sudden comprehension, and restored cordiality.*
Oh, ye didn't know him as *Bob ?* . . . . I see ! no—that were his private name,
And I 'ad to announce 'im in public on a more long-winded-er scale—
So I christened 'im "Gineral Moultky," [*apologetically*] which he '*ad* rather gone at the tail !

And a bird more popilar never performed on a peripathetic stage,
He was ollers sure of a round of applause as soon as he quitted the cage !
For he thoroughly hentered into the part he was down for to play,
An' he never got "fluffy" nor "queered the pitch"—[*Correct yourself mournfully*]—leastwise, till the hother day.

I thought he'd bin hover-exertin 'isself, and 'ud better be out of the bill;
But it wasn't till yesterday hevenin' I'd any ideer he was *ill!*
Then I see he was rough on the top of his 'ed, and his tongue looked dry at the tip—
And it dawned on me like a thunderbolt—"Great Evings!" I groaned, "The Pip!"

[*This is your first dramatic effect; if you are careful, the audience should be completely paralysed by the announcement. Make them realise the tremendous consequences involved in such a discovery, and, when you think they have done so, proceed in a quieter and more matter-of-fact tone.*

Well, I '*ad* bin trainin a siskin to hunderstudy the part,
And I sent him on—[*tolerantly*] which he done his best—but he 'adn't no notion o' *Hart!*
So I left the pitch as soon as I could, and (meanin' to make more 'aste,)
I cut across one o' them buildin' sites, as was left a runnin' to waste.

[*Now you have to build up your background for the main incident of the piece; try to make it all real and vivid to the intelligence of your audience—take your time.*
There was yawning pits [*some elocutionists would suit the action to the adjective here, but we do not advise it—yawning is so infectious!*] by the flinty road, as rendered the prospect dull;
And 'ere and there a winderless 'ouse, with the look of a grinning skull!

A storm 'ad bin 'anging about all day (and it *broke*, you'll remember, at last !)
So I 'urried up, it was gittin' late—and the Gineral sinkin' fast !

[*You are now approaching the harrowing part, but do not force it as yet ; keep yourself in reserve, or they will have no tears left for the finish.*

But all on a sudding I 'eard 'im give a kind of a feeble flap,
So I stops an' I sez, in a 'opeful way, "Why, you're up in yer stirrups, old chap !"

[*A bold metaphor this to be applied to a bird, but quite in keeping with your character. Now lower your voice to a level hopelessness.*

But I see by the shine in his sorrowful eye he was thinkin' "Afore I go,
I'd like to see one performance—for the last—of the dear old Show !"

[*This is a genuine touch of nature, and should go home to everybody.*

And I sez, with a ketch in my voice, "You *shall !*" and I whipped the sheet off the board,
I stuck up the pair o' trestles, and fastened the tight-rope cord ; [*Feverishly.*
Then I propped the Gineral up in a place from which he could see the 'ole,
An' I set the tabbies a-sparring, and the mice a-climbing the pole.

I put my company through their tricks—and they made my hold eyes dim ;

[*A kind of sympathetic, almost awed, respect for next three lines.*

For they never performed for no orjence like they did that night for *him!*

Them tabbies sparred with a science you'd 'ardly expect in sich,

An' the mouse (what usually boggles) fetched flags with never no itch!

Aye, we worked the Show in that lonely place to the sound of the mutterin' storm, [*Give a touch of grandeur to this.*

Right through till we come to the finish—the part *he* used to perform.

[*Impressively.*] He was out of the cage in a minnit! In a bust o' puffessional pride,

He pecked that incompitent siskin, till he made him stand o' one side!

[*Here you may allow your voice to falter a little.*

Well, I felt like 'aving a good cry *then*—[*stoically*] but the time 'adn't come for that;

So I slipped his uniform over his 'ed, and tied on his little cock-'at: [*With deep tenderness.*

And he set in his tiny kerridge, and was drored along by the mice, [*In a tone of affectionate retrospection.*

A-lookin' that 'appy and pleased with hisself, I got 'em to do it twice!

[*You have now arrived at your most impressive and affecting point. If your elocution is only sympathetic enough, you will be able to paint the whole situation for your audience; the dreary neighbourhood, the grief-stricken company, and, under a lurid menacing sky,*

the sublime figure of that little canary for the central point in your picture.

The werry tabbies they gazed on him then with their heyes dilatin' in haw,

As he 'obbled along to the cannon, with a match in his wasted claw;

I never 'eard that cannon afore give sech a tremenjious pop— [*Throw in a suggestion of mystic solemnity here.*

And a peal o' thunder responded, as seemed [*look up and around you with an awed wonder*] all over the shop!

[*Don't pause here, or you may convey an impression that the thunder* preceded *the lightning—which would be contrary to the laws of nature. Here the two are simultaneous.*]

For a second Bob stood in the lightning, so perky, and bold, and big;—

Then . . . a stagger . . . a flutter . . . a broken chirp—

[*You can add immensely to the effect here by appropriate action. Now make your pause, giving time for a solemn hush to fall upon your hearers, then with a forced calm, a matter-of-factness assumed to cover your own emotion,*

—He was orf, Sir—[*a slight gulp*]—he'd 'opped the twig!

[*One last pause, then more briskly, but with strong feeling, give the final couplet.*

So now you've the hexplanation of the crape round the tabbies' necks,

And kin understand why we've closed to-day, "in token of our respecks."

CONCLUDING WORDS.

THE time has now come to bid the pupil a solemn but kindly farewell. It has been the aim of the Compiler to furnish the young carpet-knight for the fray as completely as possible, and, if the Amateur Reciter be not (as is the opinion of some) already encased in triple brass, the panoply of pieces with which he has been armed in the course of this manual should go far towards rendering him invulnerable.

Let him go forth, then, to storm the drawing-room, and mount the platform, inscribing his name (unaccompanied, of course, by that of the author) upon the honour-roll of countless programmes. As compiler and author, we wish him heartily all the success his own merits and those of the pieces he honours by his preference may deserve.

Only one thing would we ask in return—which is that, when he is retiring, flushed with triumph and exertion, amidst an intoxicating murmur of faint

applause and renewed conversation, he will not suffer his head to be so completely turned as to refuse, in the privacy of his own heart, some slight part in his success to the humble instruments by which he has achieved it.

THE END.

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